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NAIT NUGGET

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Arnold Rumbold says giving back is a “responsibility.”

Photo by Ana Kostyrko

\$2.04 million donation helps fund NAIT’s largest student award

By Amy St. Amand

There’s a quiet humility to Arnold Rumbold’s philanthropy.

The 93-year-old has donated millions of dollars to organizations around the city, including NAIT, where he was named a Distinguished Friend of the Institute in 2022 and an Honorary Diploma recipient in 2024.

Rumbold also recently donated a whopping \$2.04 million to fund three initiatives at NAIT, including a \$10,000 leadership award — NAIT’s largest student award.

Despite how his support has impacted the city, he doesn’t care much about being noticed for it. The ceremony announcing his donation to NAIT was even closed to the public.

“The right people know. The wrong people don’t

have to. It doesn’t matter about them. It’s a feeling of responsibility,” he said. “We’ve lived in great communities, it’s our responsibility to see that that continues.”

Instead, Rumbold wants people to focus on what really matters: the students.

“I wouldn’t concentrate that their name is up there on an interesting place,” he said. “I would concentrate on the fact that the money that we put into this is going into programs to help advance students.”

“And that’s where it should go.”

Rumbold doesn’t have a traditional donor story. He grew up on a homestead with no electricity, and remembers draining the flashlight batteries playing with motors. In grade 12, he worked

with a local electrical contractor for an informal apprenticeship, and in 1953, he started training as an electrician — but not at NAIT.

Rumbold went to what eventually became SAIT. He moved to Edmonton in 1958 with his wife and worked as an electrician until 1964, when he realized he had a knack for estimating while working on the construction of NAIT’s Administrative building. Rumbold later started a consulting business, where he stayed until he ended his career at 70.

Despite never attending NAIT, he’s donated thousands to the institution, simply because he believes in the trades.

“The trades are where it’s at nowadays. You need university, you need NAIT. And they’re both equally



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important,” said Rumbold.

A legacy of generosity spanning decades

The first time Rumbold donated to NAIT was in 2007. He and his late wife, Grace, created the Arnold Rumbold Apprenticeship Award. Focusing on women in the trades, recipients were awarded \$1500.

Jessica Kelly received the award in 2018 after a career change. At 35, she had just left a bad relationship and was looking to build financial independence and start over. She enrolled in NAIT’s Electrician program and got a job at a small commercial electrical company.

The money from the award helped her purchase tools and other school supplies, but the friendship that blossomed with Rumbold was far more impactful to her.

“You don’t expect when you get a bursary to actually have any contact with the person giving you the money,” said Kelly. “It was actual caring behind the action. It wasn’t just about how it looked. They actually cared, which made a huge difference.”

Kelly eventually moved into the estimating side of electrical, mirroring Rumbold’s own career path — something the two discussed in their regular phone calls.

“He was telling me about this path, and how amazed he was that I was actually

embarking on a very similar path as he did, and he shared how much he loved that path and his passion for it.”

“He was really hoping that it would be as successful for me as it was for him.”

“The right people know. The wrong people don’t have to. It doesn’t matter about them. It’s a feeling of responsibility,” said Rumbold.

“We’ve lived in great communities, it’s our responsibility to see that that continues.”

On Jan. 5, Kelly will start a new job in her home city of Montreal as an estimator. She’s nervous — working in the trades is hard for many people, but especially women. The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum reports that consistently, less women finish their programs than men. In 2022, only 36 per cent of women registered in a Red Seal trade completed their program.

“Over the years, I’ve seen a lot of people come and go. There was eight of us in our classroom, and out of the eight, I think four of us made it,” said Kelly.

But she credits Arnold’s mentorship and support as a big motivator to keep going.

“Him touching base every so often and encouraging me, I felt accountable in some ways to having to continue forward

no matter what.”

“It’s a hard industry, and it’s always nice when you know you have nice people out there to help and mentor and support.”

While the Arnold and Grace Rumbold Leadership Award isn’t solely focused on the trades, it will certainly have a similar impact on students that receive it.

“It’s sort of life-changing, for many students,” said Robyn Khunkun, NAIT’s Associate Vice-President, Advancement and Alumni Relations. “He really wanted this element of recognizing students for the great work

that they’re doing beyond the classroom, and beyond their studies.”

Rumbold, while optimistic about the futures of young people, recognizes his generation was presented with different opportunities.

“I would say that my generation has come through the best times of ever,” he said. He mentioned how times are changing and how people like his granddaughter are fortunate to have a well-paying job.

“Not everyone is going to be enjoying that, even with good education,” he said. “NAIT and the technical schools offer education, which gives you good wages when you step out the last door.”

Applications for the award are open now, and the deadline to apply is March 2, 2026.

Rumbold’s \$2.04 million donation will be split in three ways:

Arnold and Grace Leadership Award

\$1.04 million will go to NAIT’s largest student award — recipients will each receive \$10,000.

Advanced Skills Centre

\$500,000 will be used for NAIT’s Advanced Skills Centre, for things like supplies and equipment.

Supporting youth engagement and mental health

\$500,000 will support engaging youth in the skilled trades at events like Jill of All Trades, and mental health initiatives.



Arnold Rumbold (left) talks to an Instructor at NAIT’s Jill of All Trades event.

Photo by Ana Kostyrko

Photographic Technology: A disappointing end for beloved program

After four years of inactivity, NAIT's Photographic Technology program was terminated. But for the staff and alumni who fought for its survival, the decision leaves a bitter taste.



A class portrait from Ray Hooper, who graduated in 2017. Hooper “learned literally everything” in the Photographic Technology program.

Photo supplied

By Sara Sheydwasser

When NAIT paused its Photographic Technology program in 2021, faculty believed the break would be temporary. For the next two years, they lobbied to bring it back. But their efforts fell short, and in September 2023, NAIT's Academic Council voted to suspend the program — a decision that would ultimately lead to its official termination in 2025.

But the path to termination wasn't straightforward, and some graduates and former faculty still believe NAIT made the wrong choice.

The program was a unique two-year diploma focusing on technical photography skills alongside business courses.

“I learned literally everything in that program,” said Ray Hooper, an award-winning photographer who graduated from the program in 2017. “Learning the ins and outs of every genre of photography along with business, I think definitely sets me apart from other people that have not taken the program.”

After being paused for two years, NAIT brought forward a motion to suspend the program in April 2023 after a program review.

Sauna MacDonald, president of the NAIT Academic Staff Association and member of Academic Council, said that the main reason NAIT wanted to suspend the program was attrition.

“So they might have a lot of people in the first year, but by the time they were enrolled in the second year, a bunch of people dropped off and never ended up completing the diploma at all.”

Enrolment data is publicly available in NAIT's annual reports for five years — from 2015/16 to 2021/22. There is no data on attrition in the annual reports.

Photographic Technology hit its projected enrolment targets four out of five years. In 2018/19, the program missed their target by two seats; projected enrolment was 50 students, and the actual was 48.

NAIT stopped publishing program-specific enrolment rates in 2019. In 2020, NAIT told *the Nugget* in an email they switched to recording only aggregate enrolment numbers

Changes to entrance requirements hurt program, said staff

At that April meeting, the academic staff, students and chief academic officers that make up Academic Council had concerns about changes to the program's entry requirements NAIT made in 2019. The requirement for prospective students to complete a career investigation report was removed, and the competitive entrance standard for the program was dropped.

The removal of competitive entrance standards can happen when demand for a program is low, NAIT said in an email to *the Nugget*. NAIT was not available for an interview.

Getting rid of the career investigation was a major concern for faculty. It forced prospective

students to observe what a career in photography would look like, MacDonald explained. Students often found that photographers are self-employed, which NAIT saw as a barrier to admission, she said.

“I kept arguing and saying [in the April meeting] there's not a bigger barrier to admission than closing a program.”

And she wasn't the only one.

“A great deal of discussion revolved around the removal of the career investigation and whether or not any attempt has been made to modernize the program,” the April 2023 meeting minutes state.

“I kept arguing and saying [in the April meeting] there's not a bigger barrier to admission than closing a program.”

The chair of the program at the time, Reg Westly, gave a presentation to show Academic Council why they should keep the program. “He did a bang-up job,” said MacDonald. “Nobody can defend a program like somebody in the program, especially a chair.”

Academic Council meetings are public, but guests aren't allowed to speak. Observers from the program watched from the sidelines, including Robert Bray, who taught in the program.

“We weren’t allowed to speak. So, we were in the room, but we weren’t.”

The first motion to suspend Photographic Technology was defeated. The minutes say that “it was concluded that the information provided did not sufficiently justify the need for program suspension.”

“[We thought,] ‘We did it, we got to keep the program, we did it,’” said Bray. “We were all pretty hot, we were all pretty hyped up.”

According to the next steps in the minutes, NAIT would conduct more research to decide the program’s future. “Further research and evidence are necessary to make an informed decision regarding the program’s future,” it says.

But following the meeting, staff said they heard nothing from NAIT.

“There was no clear path forward,” said MacDonald. “It was one thing to not suspend it, but it was still paused.”

“The total was at least two years of radio silence,” said Bray.

“Our department was very down. We used to bleed NAIT blue, and then all of a sudden we weren’t bleeding NAIT blue.”

In October 2024, another motion to suspend the program was brought to Academic Council. There was no presentation in defence of the program this time — just information justifying the suspension.

The new motion to suspend was passed.

“There was so much data thrown at them, the student and faculty representatives, they didn’t even know what to fight anymore,” said MacDonald. “Some of the data that they provided to us was, and I kid you not, here’s how many times the word photography was Googled in Alberta.”

The presentation also highlighted student retention data — where it showed 40 per cent of students exiting the program after the first year — a lack of post-secondary requirements from employers and an increase in non-traditional training options, like YouTube tutorials.

MacDonald was the lone vote against suspension.

Termination just a ‘formality’

In October of this year, Academic Council and NAIT’s Board of Governors voted to terminate the program officially. The Government of Alberta will make the final decision, but MacDonald feels termination is only a formality.

“If a program is suspended, it’s not coming back,” said MacDonald, “I don’t think in NAIT’s history there’s been a program that’s been suspended that has come back from suspension.”

Many instructors from Photographic Technology have been shuffled to other departments, like Bray, who now teaches part time in Digital Media and IT.

“I don’t have much left in me,” said Bray. “I’m not qualified to teach what I’m gonna teach, but I’ll try to learn it [and] we’ll see what happens.”

Not all instructors were moved to other departments. Some colleagues Bray knew didn’t get offers. “They were just gone,” he said.

NAIT told *the Nugget* in an email that the reasons for the termination were “low student demand,



2026 WPC Team Canada, Portrait Natural, RAIENE
HOOPER, Edmonton AB

Hooper’s photo in the Portrait/Natural category for Team Canada at the 2026 World Photographic Cup. Photo via WPC



Students from the Photographic Technology program demonstrate their skills in 2019.



Photos via NAIT

high attrition rates, changing industry needs and increasing non-traditional training options.” The decision was made after a “thorough program review and a comprehensive evaluation of the market landscape.”

But alumni and staff have other suspicions.

“I think it all comes down to money,” said MacDonald.

“Unfortunately, this is not meant to be run like a corporation, but it’s what’s happening at post-secondaries all across the country.”

Renata Medeiros, who graduated in 2021, feels the same. “I believe that NAIT believed that the program was too expensive to maintain,” said Medeiros.

“Because of all the equipment that’s needed, all the space, all the studios that are needed. It wasn’t good enough for them,” Medeiros continued. “It wasn’t bringing back business for them.”

“We used to bleed NAIT blue, and then all of a sudden, we weren’t bleeding NAIT blue.”

The end of the program, and the way it was handled, is also something many staff and alumni are disappointed about.

“It was poorly done on NAIT’s part with how they went about it and really unprofessional, if I’m being

honest,” said Hooper.

“I think it was embarrassing for them,” said Bray.

“We took it as far as we could, including getting legal opinions on it,” said MacDonald.

“When we really started to push back, NAIT admitted that it hadn’t been handled properly, that a program should not be paused for two years.”

The pause of Photographic Technology wasn’t the only one to receive criticism. In May of this year, NAIT faced backlash for a lack of consultation with industry and students after pausing 18 programs.

“I think these programs and the oversight of these programs have been mismanaged for years,” said MacDonald. “Instead of putting the work in to figure out how to fix them, they’re just getting rid of them.”

Despite numerous industry letters and a petition being started by a program alum, the Photographic Technology program’s fate has been sealed.

“It’ll be a very big loss for Alberta,” said Medeiros. “We won’t have as many quality photographers coming out of the province.”

“We’ve got a lot more people doing our trade that are very poor and hurting the name of photography to the general public,” Bray expressed. “That really hurt[s].”

“I’m really disappointed in what NAIT has done to photography,” said Hooper. “And the way that they got rid of it just truly wasn’t right.”

Students turn ideas into impact at NAIT’s annual Pitch it to Me competition

By Noura Eltinay

Young entrepreneurs had the chance to win big with valuable connections and cash at NAIT’s annual Pitch it to Me competition, hosted at the Productivity and Innovation Centre on Nov. 26.

The Pitch it to Me Competition is an annual competitive event held by NAIT’s Mawji Centre.

Five NAIT students are selected as finalists and present their ambitious business ideas to a panel of judges. The top three winners are eligible for a prize of up to \$4,000.

Dennis Sheppard, the Dean of the JR Shaw School of Business emphasized that the event is “really valuable” for students — especially those presenting their ideas for the first time.

“To compete, get feedback, ask questions, and to demonstrate that they’re passionate about their idea,” he said.

The competition is also a great way for students to see what life is like at NAIT. “Entrepreneurship is one of the things that we would say is our secret sauce at NAIT.”

The five finalists had a variety of ideas. Daniel Berg, founder of DriveSpec, creates software for automotive technicians that gives “instant access to accurate wheel-nut torque specifications.”

Peter Milne uses AI and virtual reality to assist treatment for trauma in therapy practices in his business, Praetorian Studios.

Another AI business came from Ayub Indoy. His pitch, Suko Scales, uses AI to generate leads to help businesses grow faster.

And this year’s winner, Om Shah, founder of



Om Shah pitches his idea, Purus Aqua, at the 2025 Pitch It to Me competition. Photo by Noura Eltinay

Purus Aqua, wants to create “low-cost, modular filtration and storage systems for small-scale and Indigenous farms in the Prairies.”

Each one of them presented their business plans with confidence, outlining the problem they aim to solve. They also shared further details on how their business model will work, the current market for their products or services and any progress to date.

After the finalists presented their ideas, the moment the crowd had been anticipating arrived: the winners and prizes for this year’s competition were announced.

Praetorian Studios earned \$1,000 for third place, and Daniel Berg and DriveSpec took home \$2,500

for second. First place gave Om Shah \$4,000.

Each of the winners got back on stage again following the announcement of their names and businesses, and afterwards people got a chance to congratulate them. They were all celebrated for their ideas, but Shah’s idea really spoke to the judges.

“It’s been a really big issue for farmers because they’re losing their animals, their crops are going down, and it’s really affecting their livelihood,” he said.

“It definitely got us some of the awareness that we wanted ... it just gives us some more confidence moving forward that we can move forward with this business and things could go well.”

Nest at NAIT wins again

By Amy St. Amand

For the 10th time, NAIT’s campus bar has taken home the Best Bar None (BBN) award for Best Campus Bar. The team received the title at the 16th awards ceremony, where nightlife organizations are celebrated for meeting BBN’s criteria for service, safety and operations.

87 venues in Edmonton received their accreditation, and a panel of judges chose 11 in various categories to receive awards for going above and beyond.

Michelle Dirksen, General Manager of the Nest, is overjoyed at the win — but it’s not just hers. She emphasized that this award is a “team win.”

“It’s the front of house employees and the back of house employees

who worked tirelessly to achieve this together,” she said.

Dirksen was off for a large portion of the year due to an injury, so seeing her team get recognized means even more.

“I like to think that the team was hungry for this. So, every department, even in my absence, stepped up in their own way to make it happen.”

BBN is a voluntary accreditation program with a goal of “reducing alcohol-related harms by raising the standards of licensed premises and building positive relationships among all stakeholders.”

After following a checklist to ensure safe practices, establishments will undergo an assessment. They must



The team celebrates their win of Best Campus Bar at the BBN awards. Photo supplied

meet all mandatory objectives, and meeting bonus criteria will make them eligible to win an award.

Dirksen feels the win demonstrates the culture of “accountability, learning and supporting each other” that the Nest has built.

“It motivates us to stay committed

to responsible service and outstanding guest experiences,” she said.

Visit the Nest in S112 before they wind down for the semester. From Dec. 13 to 19 they will be open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m, and close on Dec. 20. They’ll reopen on Jan. 8, 2026 and resume regular hours.

Edmonton Transit taking steps to improve rider safety

Editorial by Carrie Hotton-MacDonald,
Branch Manager of Edmonton Transit Services

Public transit in Edmonton connects us to the people and places that make our city special, including our post-secondary institutions. As the fifth-largest urban centre in Canada with public transit service, ETS is connecting more people to public transit, supported by funding from Edmonton City Council. We are setting new ridership records. At the same time we have gaps in our bus routes, frequency and coverage, and safety has been a concern for transit riders and people using our public spaces in Edmonton. We are not alone — all across the country, cities are experiencing similar challenges.

We have made investments to add more safety-related measures in transit and more work is underway to support riders, aligned with national recommendations for transit safety and security from the Canadian Urban Transit Association. According to the Edmonton Police Service (EPS), crime in Edmonton is at its lowest rate in the last 10 years and crime severity in transit spaces has decreased.

While ETS ridership has grown, some riders feel unsafe when taking transit in Edmonton. When we ask riders for feedback about what contributes to feeling unsafe, we hear seeing houseless Edmontonians, people experiencing mental health issues and addictions in transit spaces and hearing stories about security incidents from media or other people, all contribute to negative perceptions of safety.

The City of Edmonton collaborates with the Government of Alberta to provide support for those who are experiencing challenges like homelessness, mental health issues or addiction. ETS also collaborates with the Edmonton Student Alliance to better understand the student experience, directly inform future actions and learn how we can make transit more welcoming.

We've heard from riders that the presence of Transit Peace Officers (TPO) contributes to feelings of safety. ETS is in the process of deploying 30 additional TPOs in transit spaces in 2026. This investment means greater proactive enforcement presence in stations with high call volume for incident reports, and supplements the



ETS says they are adding investments to increase safety and support riders.

Photo via NAIT

additional patrols and activities already conducted by TPOs and the EPS.

Partnerships between ETS and other organizations are also aimed at helping to meet rider needs. TPOs are often deployed jointly with EPS officers to respond to criminal complaints on transit property. Community Outreach Transit Teams (COTT) are a partnership between TPOs and outreach workers from Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. These teams can connect people to housing, mental health and substance use support services.

ETS has also partnered with organizations who can help make transit more inviting, such as local performance groups, and our partnership for "local listener" sessions as part of the Auricle project to gather ideas about wellness and social connectedness in transit.

We've also heard improved cell connectivity on the LRT would help riders feel safer. Throughout 2025, we have been working to bring cellular coverage to underground stations and tunnels and we expect this service to be available sometime in 2026.

There are several core safety resources in place to help improve rider safety. ETS Control Centre staff monitor the transit network 24 hours per

day with the help of more than 1,000 monitored security cameras across the network, and dispatch TPOs and other support as needed. Riders can call or text Transit Watch at 780-442-4900 to report suspicious activity or non-emergency security concerns. Blue phones in transit spaces also connect directly to the Control Centre. As well, riders can activate alarm strips and red emergency buttons on trains to alert the operator of potential safety issues. You can learn more about each of these resources at edmonton.ca/ETSSafety.

It's important to remember that emergencies in transit spaces — just like anywhere else — should be reported to 911. If you see someone in distress, you can also contact Crisis Diversion by calling 211, 24 hours a day.

Transit has enabled a better life for me and thousands of other people in our city. When I completed post-secondary studies, transit connected me to housing, part-time employment and recreation. I continue to use transit, along with several other members of the ETS leadership team. I know we have more work to do to improve transit in Edmonton, and as a member of the board with the Canadian Urban Transit Association, I know we aren't alone in doing this work.



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NAIT's newest club: The washroom enthusiasts

By Rafael Luis Flores

I generally like NAIT's washrooms. For the most part, they are clean and well-maintained, and they're surprisingly odour-free when not in use (except for the men's room at the ground floor of X-Wing, which has a perpetual low-level stink.)

But do I like them enough to actually hang out there? No way. I could name a hundred better spots at NAIT to hang out in besides the washrooms, but still, there are groups of students who appear to genuinely enjoy spending an ungodly amount of time just chatting with each other there.

Picture this scenario: I went for a quick washroom break during one of my classes, and just when I was drying my hands, a group of four guys entered — seemingly in the middle of a conversation. They just stayed by the open area near the entrance, not making any moves to use the toilets, nor the urinals.

I left and I went back to my class.

Ten minutes later, I realized I forgot my toque by the sink, so I quickly went back for it. What did I see? Those same four guys, still talking and in the exact same positions as when I left them. By all indications, they just went there to chat. Nothing else.

The CAT washrooms are the usual setting of these inexplicable hangouts, presumably because they are spacious enough to fit a small crowd, but similar observations have been made about the larger washrooms in the W-building and other buildings. Four out of five times, the people who do this speak a language I don't understand, so I have given up trying to figure out what topic could be so interesting that they have to talk about it in the washroom instead of literally anywhere else.

Here's the thing though — despite the confusion and annoyance that this causes, hanging out in the washrooms is not actually against any campus rules.

Given that it would be futile to discourage adults from doing something they are not really prohibited to do, I suggest they take their enthusiasm a step further by actually seeking recognition from NAITSA as a special interest club. Think about it: these washroom enthusiasts already display a level of consistency and commitment that many campus clubs can only dream of.

And imagine the potential of such a club. They can hold their events weekly in a washroom of their choice and announce it on Ooks Life, where those interested can join in the fun and learn the secrets of washroom conversation (while basking in the various sounds and aromas of human biological activity). They can also establish knowledge-sharing links with washroom enthusiasts of other schools, like the University of Alberta and MacEwan University, to devise new ways to make someone feel awkward while doing their thing in the toilet cubicle.

There will of course be challenges, such as finding a club advisor qualified enough to, well, advise these lavatory lovers on their washroom shenanigans (and not advise them to get out of the washroom, like any sensible human being would).

And there's also the prospect of trying to convince NAITSA's campus clubs manager on how such a club will enrich campus life and not *just* washroom life.

To those who are nevertheless still strongly against hanging out in washrooms, there is hope. In a previous *Nugget* article, NAITSA's campus clubs manager was quoted saying interest clubs have an average life span of just five years. By encouraging washroom enthusiasts to form a club now, they might actually be gone by 2030. Let this be your gift to future generations of NAIT students who love a peaceful washroom.



Art by Chinny Feb Taleon

A first-timer's tattoo guide

Everything you need to know about choosing, getting and caring for your first tattoo



"If you walk into a place and it makes you feel uneasy or you feel like the artists don't wanna give you the time of day, maybe that's not the place that you wanna get tattooed."

By Mathieu Durnford and Alleah Boisvert

Getting your first tattoo can be intimidating; it is a piece of art that will stay with you forever. Despite the worries, it's not as scary as it seems. *The Nugget* talked to Travis Salty from Easy Tiger Tattoo to compile a guide for students excited about taking their first jump into the world of tattoos.

When it comes to style, 'bold will hold'

Researching which tattoo styles appeal to you can help narrow your search for the perfect first design.

Salty recommends picking "something classic" as a first tattoo; something that will last for years to come and not go out of style.

Traditional designs, like roses, skulls or jaguars, are timeless. Salty has seen this first-hand. "I'll talk to old guys that I'll run into on 118th Avenue who got tattooed in the 60s and I can still tell exactly what their tattoo is, I can still read it," he said.

It's important to take the time to consider where on your body you would like to get your tattoo. Make a plan that would suit the design and style you choose. Your artist can help you with this.

Don't know what to get? Peruse the flash wall

For indecisive first-timers, Salty thinks flash is the way to go. "Chances are they've probably tattooed it before already, so they know that design passes the test and is gonna look good on people."



Travis Salty tattoos at Easy Tiger Tattoo, a 17-minute walk from NAIT.

Photos by Mathieu Durnford

If classic American traditional flash tattoos are your thing, Salty believes tattooers who paint often nail the fundamentals.

"Not just digitally, but like actually sitting down with a brush and watercolours and painting out their flesh. That's what the old masters did in the 1920s and '30s," he said.

Use your intuition and feel out the vibes

When selecting an artist, Salty suggests using

social media to browse artists' work. Reviews left by previous clients can help, too.

But always go for a consultation before deciding where to get a tattoo. Run a "vibe check" and see if you feel welcomed.

"Your intuition is strong. When you walk into a place and you feel that good positive energy, then you'll know that that's probably the right place for you," he said. "They're marking you for life," said Salty.



When you look back at your tattoo, you'll want to think of the positive experience you had. "You don't want to think about like, 'Oh, this guy treated me like a prick,'" he said.

Preparing for your first tattoo appointment

Get a full night's rest, drink lots of fluids, eat a good meal and dress in comfortable clothes. This will help you go into the appointment feeling physically well and in a positive headspace.

"Try not to be at the pub all night long the night before," said Salty. Your artist will probably be able to tell if you were out drinking beers, he said.

When dealing with nerves, talk to your artist and get comfortable. "Usually by the time we start tattooing, those nerves are gone," he explained.

Salty reminds nervous clients that "tattoos can be like armor," helping them move through life with confidence once complete.

Taking care of your fresh ink

Keep your tattoo out of the sun to preserve the design as it heals and avoid germ-heavy environments such as pools, lakes or sweaty sports equipment for two weeks to prevent infection.

"The tattoo is your responsibility

once you leave here. It hurt enough to get it the first time, you [probably don't] want to have to get it touched up because you went and played hockey that night," said Salty. "Just be mindful ... take it easy, especially for that first couple of days."

Why get a tattoo?

Tattoos are a powerful way of immortalizing life experiences and creating a collection of art. Salty sees tattoos as his "longest running creative project" or like the rings of a tree, telling his personal story.

"It's like a map of your life and the places that you've been, the people you were hanging out with, the dreams that you had," said Salty.

Tattoos don't always have to be super meaningful, they can also be "light and free" — as long as the artist takes the application seriously, said Salty. Like armour, tattoos can help you come into your own and are a unique way of expressing yourself.

Students can check out Salty's work by following @t_salty on Instagram. Easy Tiger Tattoo (@easytigertattoos) is located at 11738 96 Street — about a 17-minute walk from campus. The shop is offering NAIT students and staff 15 per cent off with proof of enrollment or employment.



U of A town hall on transit safety connects students with city leaders



Speakers included Mayor Andrew Knack and ETS officials.

Photo by Bradley Houston

By Bradley Houston

A student transit town hall at the University of Alberta on Nov. 20 brought students face-to-face with Edmonton's key decision makers on transit safety. In collaboration with non-profit organization Edmonton Transit Riders, fourth year U of A business students organized the Trust Transit panel for a capstone project. It hosted panelists Mayor Andrew Knack, Superintendent Fred Macham of Transit Peace Officers and Mariah Eshkakogan of the Community Outreach Transit Team.

"A team of students from the University of Alberta came to us with a proposal to bring transit decision-makers and students together to talk about student transit needs," said Edmonton Transit Riders on their website. The group advocates for better transit in the city. "We believe in platforming the voices of everybody interested in public transit advocacy in Edmonton, and are happy to support the Trust Transit team in their work to improve the student experience on transit."

The town hall mostly featured questions from students with the panel answering them. Taking place in the Alberta School of Business' Carruthers Student Commons, a small crowd of students gathered before everyone took a seat. Before the panel started, the speakers near us were personable and friendly; by the time questions began, though, the town hall was on task and serious.

The main topic was safety — an issue often brought up by students. Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) has been continuously addressing

this through the Enhanced Transit Safety Plan introduced by city council in 2022.

The city is pushing to create more day warming stations to deter loitering in transit stations. This way, stations become safer for people using them for their express function.

As well, more dedicated staff will be added to the pool of transit peace officers — meaning more peace officers in stations keeping order.

While not a direct strategy, the panelists pointed out that higher ridership leads to safer commutes. The city has already seen a record-breaking 61.1 million trips in 2024 and a 15 per cent increase in ridership since 2023. Riding or being in a station alone in the evening can be intimidating, but as Edmonton's population grows, more lines open and more people adopt ridership, transit spaces will fill up and therefore become safer.

Lots of encouragement was given to use the outreach phone number 780-232-2782 if students see vulnerable community members who need help.

As Eshkakogan explained, an arrest or expulsion is the last resort. Most of the time, the Community Outreach Transit Team, in partnership with the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, will attempt to get people targeted support. For safety concerns such as harassment, ETS recommends on their website to call or text 780-442-4900. For emergencies, call 911.

In other news, 5G service in underground LRT tunnels can be expected sometime 2026. This means riders will no longer be cut off while

commuting downtown.

But the big question I had, that may be close to some NAIT students' hearts: why does the Metro Line terminate at Health Sciences/Jubilee? As many students might know, if you are coming or going to NAIT from the south side, you must transfer at some point — and in high congestion times, that means packed trains.

The answer, unfortunately, is that if trains were to regularly run through the University Avenue intersection, it would bottleneck cars too badly.

When I asked if there was a solution in the works, Mayor Andrew Knack responded that "the cost to make that change is quite high."

"When we're talking about limited capital funding, I would likely see us wanting to prioritize getting more buses on the street, extending other LRT lines like the line from Blatchford across the Yellowhead to other areas before you probably address that," said Knack.

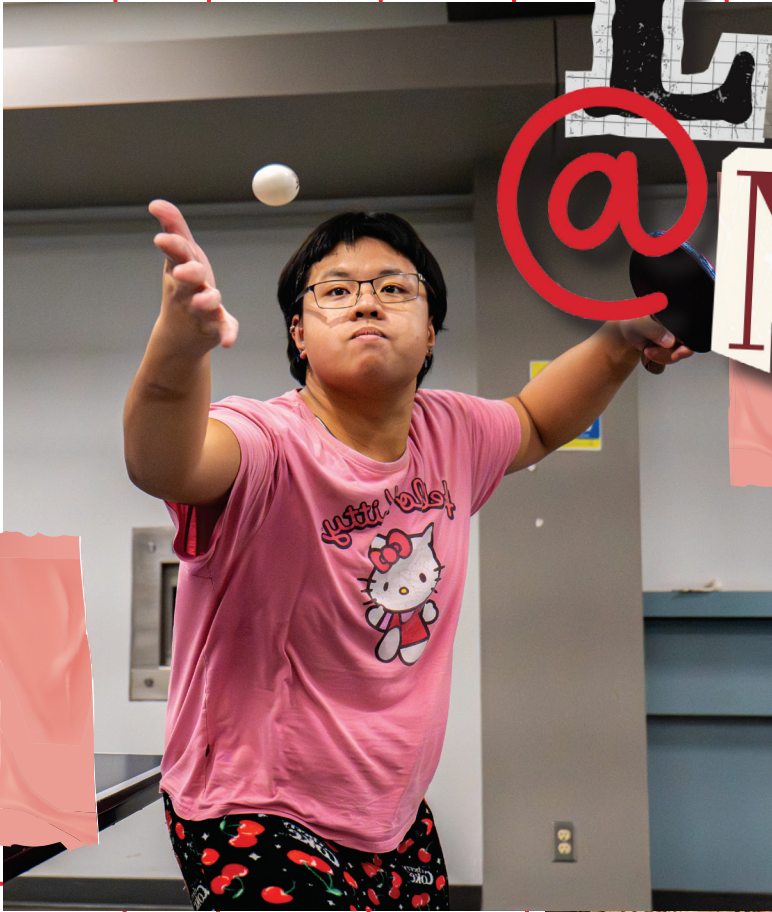
But that doesn't mean it couldn't be a priority in the future, and Knack still wants to hear from NAIT students, who he said "are doing incredible work in this city."

"I hope all the NAIT students are realizing and remember how much their voice matters right now," he said. "If you've got opinions about the city, if you want to see certain things, reach out to me, reach out to your councillors."

Students can find more information on how to contact their city councillor by visiting the City Government page on the City of Edmonton's website — NAIT is located in Ward O-day'min under councillor Anne Stevenson.



Life @ NAIT





Alumni holiday gift guide

By Alleah Boisvert

Shopping for the holidays is rough. If you're trying to avoid the big-box stores this year, look local. Like, really local. The NAIT Alumni Business Directory is home to dozens of businesses owned by former NAIT students. We've done the hard work for you and found some gift ideas for everyone on your list (even you!).

Stocking Stuffers

1. Superfood chocolate bars from 7 Summits Snacks

Buy a pack of six of chocolate superfood bars from 7 Summits Snacks, co-owned by NAIT Personal Fitness Trainer grad Leanna Carriere, and you'll be set when you need to add a little treat to your loved ones' gifts or stockings. These dark chocolate bars are made to fuel your adventures, so they're perfect for health-conscious fitness friends and family or to stick in your snowpants on a ski trip.

2. A 4-pack of craft beers from Analog Brewing

Split 'em up and stick 'em in stockings! Bryan Launier, co-owner of Analog Brewing, is a NAIT Marketing grad and a lover of video games and beer — in my opinion, two things that go well together. Who doesn't appreciate the weight a can of craft beer adds to their stocking? They'll be so impressed when they pull out a video-game branded can of Power Up Porter (perfect for winter, by the way), they might even crack it right then and there. Well, that's what I would do.

3. Spices 'n sauces from ACME Meat Market

NAIT Meatcutting grad Corey Meyer has been the owner of ACME since 2008, but the business has been in operation for over 100 years — these guys might know what they're talking about when it comes to seasoning meats. Pop over to Ritchie Market and get some locally-made steak spice, hickory BBQ sauce or various meat rubs for a stocking stuffer. Personally, I would stuff them in someone's stocking who might grill up some nice cuts of meat for me to eat.

4. A cozy sweatsuit or beanie from Nexarina

Nexarina was founded by Mikayla Balfour, an entrepreneur who graduated from NAIT's BBA program in 2023. As a marketing student, she wanted to find a solution for shorter women who can't seem to find outerwear that fits. Nexarina sells sweatsuits made from high-quality materials, which make a luxurious and useful Christmas gift. For a more affordable but still quality product, Nexarina also sells cute beanies — every beanie helps fund Balfour's

mission to provide snow and ski apparel that fit women like her. These products sell out!

Under the tree

5. A hand-crafted birdhouse from Backyard Birds Nature Shop

Biological Sciences grad Jan Tollenaar owns this bird lovers' supply store in Spruce Grove. They sell products like bird seed, bird feeders and beautiful locally-made bird houses like this one. Is there anything more relaxing than watching chickadees fly around on a winter morning? Bonus: pick up the *Birds of Alberta* book while you're there for another gift perfect for a nature lover.

6. Bagel merch from Beb's Bagels

The Montreal-style bagels made at Beb's, co-owned by NAIT Cook grad Peter Keith, are best eaten fresh. But if you're on Whyte to grab the infamous Meuwly's and Beb's combo (the pastrami bagel-wich), grab some cute Beb's Bagels merch for the Bagel Boy or Pastrami Mami on your list while you're there. Beb's makes shirts, hats and my favourite — tote bags.

7. A bag of specialty coffee beans from Jaguar Coffee

Brothers and NAIT grads Keyton (Business Administration, Management) and Greg Wilson (Civil Engineering) own Jaguar Coffee, an online coffee shop that sources beans from Latin America. Their most popular blend is the Clásico Peru, and it can be bought in five-pound whole bean bags or 340 gram bags.

8. Seasonal moonshine from Hansen Distillery

What says the holidays better than Mulled Cranberry Moonshine? Kris Sustrik (Welder) is a master distiller and founded the distillery with Shayna Hansen. If you want to try something new this holiday season, need a pick-me-up to get through the torturous family conversations or just want to support local, check out their beautiful distillery and snag one of their unique seasonal offerings. They've got whisky, moonshine and a bevy of cream liquers.

9. A wood-carved gift made by a carpenter

Mark Derkach is a NAIT grad and carpenter who creates beautiful custom wood carving and wood burning products. For hand-engraved wood products, Woodnt It Be Nice If is priced very fairly — this euchre board is only \$45. Derkach also creates engraved cutting boards and holiday ornaments, so you could cross multiple gifts off your list if you visit him during one of the many Christmas market pop-ups throughout the city.

Yes, a NAIT grad owns that!

NAIT grads are everywhere, and some of your favourite Edmonton eats probably owned by NAIT grads. This is basically encouragement to celebrate the end of term with a little treat.

- **Confetti Sweets:** Nothing says Christmas like cookies, and Kathy Leskow's Confetti Sweets has it all. Get a few for friends, and a few more for yourself!
- **Duchess Bake Shop:** Jay Downton (Business Administration) and Ewa Jastrzebski (Interior Design) own this popular French bakery on 124 street.
- **Cavern:** Stock up on your charcuterie needs at Cavern, a cozy cheese shop in the heart of downtown owned by grad Tricia Bell.
- **Highlevel Diner:** An Edmonton institution! Adam Stoyko is a graduate of the Cook program and focuses on "local heartfelt food."
- **Compass Chocolates:** Priya Winsor is a Baking and Pastry Arts grad, and you may have seen her on the latest season of *Spring Baking Championship*.

Photo credits:

1. 7 Summits Snacks, sevensummitssnacks.com; 2. Analog Brewing, analogbrewing.ca; 3. Acme Meat Market, photo supplied; 4. Nexarina, nexarina.com; 5. Backyard Birds Nature Shop, backyardbirdsnaatureshop.ca; 6. Beb's Bagels, bebsbagels.ca; 7. Jaguar Coffee, jaguar.ca; 8. Hansen Distillery, hansendistillery.com; 9. Woodnt it be nice if, woodntitbeniceif.com

Ooks men's hockey team hoping for playoffs comeback

'We're better than our record,' says head coach



Photo via NAIT Ooks

Editorial by Emmett Moore

Do not believe the numbers — I have faith in the NAIT Ooks men's hockey team despite their current playoff standings. They're currently tied for last place with the University of Alberta's Augustana Campus Vikings (UAA); both teams have sat near last place this season like it was a comfortable arm chair on the beach. But the Ooks are putting in work against the toughest teams in the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) and, in my opinion, playing better hockey than the UAA overall.

NAIT has three players in the top 20 for points compared to the Vikings, whose leading scorer sits tied for 27th. Ooks goalie McCoy Bidewell is second in the league in saves with a significantly higher win percentage than UAA's Zach Willms and Mason Lobreau, who have evenly split time in the crease. And most importantly, the Ooks' head coach Scott Fellnermayr believes this isn't the end for the team.

"It's a little bit tough to swallow," said Fellnermayr. "But yeah, it is what it is and we'll keep working right to the end. We've got a good group, we're good in every aspect of the game essentially, and I can only imagine the tide will turn for us."

Those who went to the Ooks home opener on Oct. 18 saw a plethora of chances on net. Like a true Ookpik, the beautiful Inuit translation for snowy owl,

the Ooks swoop in for dangerous chances on net and seldom let a chance go to waste — like when they scored short-handed and power play goals before a nail-biting loss to SAIT on Nov. 21.

However, the team feels "snake-bitten" — too many of their chances end without scoring. While frustrating, Fellnermayr sees positives to a slower start; it's a chance to improve on a foundation built on chances that are already being created.

"You'd rather have the struggles early; it's forced us to look at every part of our game and make sure we're doing everything right, and we're not going to make these same mistakes later on in the season."

Fellnermayr said teams that are "getting away with everything right now and still winning games" might not have this same chance to build and adapt like the NAIT Ooks do.

All this proud buildup comes from strong players. Fellnermayr sees potential in. Top performers Ethan Leyer, Ty Whitford, Evan Arnold and the flexible rookie Decker Mujcin all have more than eight points and are comfortably among the top 32 scorers in the league.

Even players that don't have the same statistical recognition got applause by Fellnermayr, such as Tyler Blocha and Ty Hodge for playing scrappy and

forcing turnovers. And after getting defenceman Cale Lyons back from a bone fracture injury, the team has seen Lyons take opportunities to join the power play and offence while remaining a fantastic, intelligent defensive option.

"There's a lot of guys that probably feel like they're a little bit snake-bitten right now and they're not quite converting on some of their chances," said Fellnermayr, but the team's goal-hunting mentality does not go unnoticed. After watching the game recaps and checking analytics, Fellnermayr thinks NAIT still significantly outnumbers the competition in scoring chances. This is strengthened by an expected score that also seems to tilt in NAIT's favour, he explained.

"We're not winning the games, but it does matter in the sense of selling it to the team and saying 'Hey, we're better than our record,'" said Fellnermayr.

I think the tides will change for the Ooks. I would not trust the stats to remain stagnant, but I'll have to wait and see what's in store for this exciting and powerful team next semester.

The Ooks men's hockey team will play an exhibition game at MacEwan University on Jan. 3 before their first post-holiday home game against the Concordia Thunder on Jan. 9 at 6 p.m.

Women's hockey team heads to Quebec for national exhibition tournament



Photo via NAIT Oaks

By Geono Aloisio

The women's hockey team will head to "La Belle Province" in early January to play exhibition games in the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) test run for a national women's hockey tournament.

Six teams, along with the Oaks, will descend on Quebec City to compete

over four days. The CCAA has not had a national hockey championship since discontinuing the men's championship in 2001.

This is the second iteration of the tournament, building on the CCAA's test series in Nova Scotia with the Atlantic Collegiate Athletic Association (ACAA) last year.

"I think to be a national sport ... it showcases the female game," NAIT women's hockey head coach Brendan Jensen said about his expectations ahead of the tournament. "I expect the competition to be fairly good throughout all of the schools. And as a team and as a staff, we're really looking forward to showcasing ourselves out there."

NAIT won't be the only ones representing the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) at the tournament. The Lakeland Rustlers and Olds College Broncos are also joining the Oaks in Quebec City, with the remaining teams coming from across Quebec and the Maritimes. 10 total teams will compete.

The Oaks will play Quebec Student Sports Network (RSEQ) collegiate teams Trois-Rivières Diablos, Thetford Filons and Rimouski Pionnières. Depending on their record, the Oaks could play up to three more games with a chance to win a medal.

While the tournament is relatively new, Jensen believes there are a few prerequisites that must be in place before the league moves forward with a national championship, including sustainability.

"You know, a willingness to show that the three conferences (ACAA, ACAC and RSEQ) would make it a Class-B national championship, are willing to host events and put on well-run events," he explained.

"So having that and having a great student athlete experience ... and make it sustainable. Also, there has to be parity."

Jensen seems optimistic the teams and schools involved are taking proper steps to make the tournament a mainstay on future schedules.

"We're not the decision makers to do that. But I think then, we're pushing the ante, and we're trying to showcase ourselves that the sport deserves a national championship at this level," said Jensen. "I'm very hopeful for it, it might not be following this tournament, but in a couple of years, hopefully ... it becomes a national governing sport at the CCAA level, which would be tremendous."

The action will take place at Centre Caztel in Sainte-Marie-de-Beauce, Que., with the Oaks taking on Trois-Rivières on Jan. 9.

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Ooks player from Ukraine wins ACAC Rookie of the Year

‘I’m a simple guy who just plays soccer,’ said Ukrainian ESL student Vladyslav Satsevich



Vladyslav Satsevich hopes to keep competing after playing soccer at a high level in Ukraine.

Photo by Ana Kostyrko

By Ibrahim Basim

Vladyslav Satsevich has made a noticeable impact on the field since joining the NAIT Ooks last September. After becoming one of the team’s most dynamic players, the defenceman from Kahovka, Ukraine earned the title of 2025 Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) North Men’s Soccer Rookie of the Year.

In Ukraine, soccer is quite popular among kids — they were always playing it outside. “That is where I first started playing and fell in love with this game,” said Satsevich.

“My environment was very sports-friendly. At first, I did dancing for seven years. When I was around 10 or 11, my friend invited me to a football (soccer) training.”

After that, Satsevich decided he wanted to continue playing seriously.

Currently enrolled in NAIT’s English as a Second Language program, Satsevich wants to polish his skills on and off the field. Playing soccer with English-speaking teams before the Ooks has helped him communicate with his teammates. “In the field, it’s a little bit different. Because you have this

language style,” he said. “But in life, it’s a little bit difficult.”

Coming to Canada brought major changes. Satsevich arrived in Canada alone, leaving his family in Ukraine while adjusting to a new country.

“The language, the culture and lifestyle were all new to me. I also had to start working because football here is not paid. In Ukraine, it’s different,” he said. Satsevich was paid a salary playing soccer back home. Now, he works in construction outside of school and sports.

“So it took time, but I update to this country,” he said.

Despite this transition, Satsevich emerged as a key player for the Ooks. In only nine regular-season games, he added three assists, scored four goals and recorded one game-winning goal.

This season also delivered high and low moments Satsevich will not forget.

“I remember one great moment when we won the provincial championship. Yeah, it was an amazing feeling,” he said. “And I have one negative moment. When we played in nationals, we

conceded a goal in the last minutes and lost.”

Though he was named Rookie of the Year, Satsevich stays humble. “I try not to think too much about this pressure, because I’m a simple guy who just plays soccer,” he said.

When he isn’t studying or competing, Satsevich likes going to the gym, walking his dog and playing PS5. For the future, his goal is to continue developing as a player while learning English.

“Why I come into NAIT is I want to improve my English. It helps the team, like Ooks, right? Yeah, and to grow as players,” he said. Having already played at a high level in Ukraine, he hopes to keep competing.

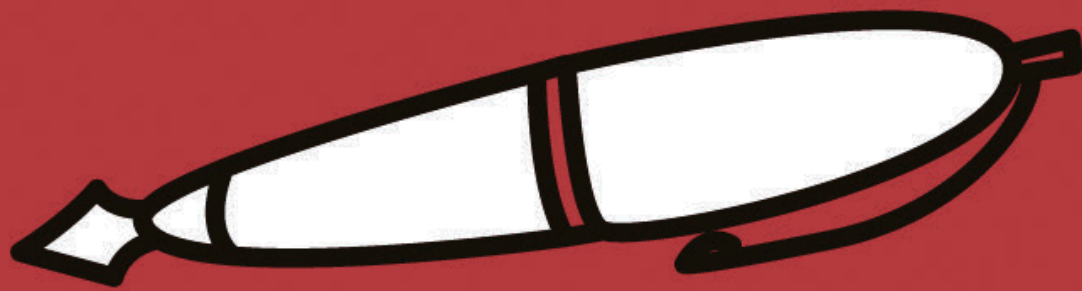
What really makes Satsevich’s story inspiring is the way he handled change. He arrived in a new country, faced a new environment yet continued striving to achieve his goals.

For others overcoming similar challenges, Satsevich put it this way: “My advice is simple. Work hard every training every day, stay focused and set goals you can reach. And most importantly, stay a good person. That’s all.”



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24-hour study space on campus? Keep dreaming, NAIT students

By Jasmeen Kaur

Whether you're an early bird or a night owl depends on your nature. Early risers at NAIT can easily grab a seat in the library or enjoy the bright, open space of the NAITrium. But for students who study after dark, it's a challenge. Once evening classes end and the campus starts to quiet down, finding a comfortable and reliable place to focus can be difficult.

I still remember my first semester at NAIT. My 6 p.m. to 9:50 p.m. microeconomics class ended just as most study spaces on campus were closing. By the time I packed up and left CAT, the study commons doors were locked and the hallways were almost empty. Studying late on campus often meant finding an empty hallway or heading home before the last train — not the most productive environment.

Many students at NAIT face the same struggle. We work during the day, take classes in the evening and manage assignments that don't fit into "daytime hours." For us, accessible study spaces at night aren't a luxury; they're a necessity. There are a few spots that stay open after regular business hours, but they're few and far between.

One of the best resources that many students overlook is NAIT's bookable study rooms. Through the MyNAIT Portal, students can reserve private or group rooms in different buildings across campus. I often booked one after class to finish assignments in peace. These rooms are quiet, comfortable and equipped with Wi-Fi, ideal for working on deadlines without distractions. Just keep in mind that campus closes at 10:30 p.m. at night.

If you're looking for a cozy environment, the study lounge at U210 is another great spot, and it's open until 10 p.m. — two hours later than the library on the third floor. It's quiet, modern and comfortable, with sofa seats, movable tables and small enclosed pods that give you privacy when you need to focus.



Many of NAIT's study spaces are only open until 10 p.m.

Photo by Skylar Boissonault

During exam season, it's one of the best places to stay grounded while studying.

For those who need computers or printing, the computer commons in the CAT and HP buildings stay open until 10 p.m. They're convenient for students who rely on campus Wi-Fi or need to finish online quizzes after class.

But the reality is that none of these options are truly late-night spaces. Most areas on campus close around 10 p.m. or earlier, leaving night students without a dedicated place to study. That's where other schools, like the University of Alberta, stand out. The Cameron Library at the University of Alberta has a 24-hour study hall located in its basement level, open exclusively to students and staff with a ONEcard.

Friends who study there often tell me about their

overnight sessions, grabbing snacks, taking quick naps and continuing their work until sunrise. It's not about staying awake all night; it's about having the freedom to study when you're most focused — whether that be at 5 a.m., 2 p.m. or even midnight.

It would be inspiring to see NAIT move in a similar direction. A dedicated 24-hour study zone, even just one floor of the U-building or a designated wing, would make a huge difference for students who balance work, classes and long commutes. Education shouldn't end when the lights turn off.

Whether you prefer early mornings or late nights, every student deserves access to a space that fits their rhythm. Until then, NAIT's late-evening study spots are the next best thing. But for many of us, the dream of a 24-hour study space is one worth staying up for.



Graphic by Amy St. Amand

Has the world consumed too much?

By Emmett Moore

Do you spend more than \$14 a day? This money could be spent on gas, lunch or entertainment after class. These actions are the barebones of consumerism. According to The World Counts, a website tracking global challenges, if everyone lived like western consumers, we'd need five worlds to support us.

While I'm not calling for everyone to cut power lines and burn our cars and start walking everywhere in digital darkness, there's a few blatant issues right in front of students that shows maybe consumerism has gone too far.

Consumerism scratches an itch everyone has: a desire for praise and rewards. Did you finish a big project, complete a long drive or even just go to class today?

All these could warrant a reward for different people. So you go out and buy a tub of ice cream, a coffee on the way to class or get fast food after class. Bang! Consumerism. It's already consumed our thought process through a reward system that is familiar to everyone.

A little treat here and there isn't so bad, but consumerism is popping up in new ways. And the

new ways we're seeing consumerism fester might be much more insidious than those \$3 coffees.

This desire for rewards is integral to a growing industry in our world: video games. Myself and other video game enjoyers have noticed a shift in just how expensive gaming can become.

Consoles aren't as cheap as the Wii or a 3DS anymore, and the games have skyrocketed in price as well.

This need to be the newest, coolest thing has bled over from social media and is wreaking havoc in video game culture.

On top of that, companies will do anything to get you to spend money on their game through marketing and endless add-ons, like cosmetic items for your characters. You can play as Nicki Minaj in *Call of Duty* and Snoop Dogg in *Fortnite* and Zac Efron was just in a *Battlefield 6* ad.

Social media has become a consumerism machine, and it seems like every industry is in on it. It's no longer just ads anymore. With the integration of buy buttons, it's a whole different game. Buy buttons make buying from social media much easier, feeding consumerism and scratching that itch to spend.

You see all the likes and comments on products and it dawns on you: "I need this product." It's called a target audience for a reason; companies are looking to hunt down your wallet and take every dollar they can.

Every business is now showing off their newest products online. This system has become a critical part of capitalism and the future companies you will work for are probably all in on it, too. Is there any escape?

You can barely blink without seeing product placement. Fans of the Transformers franchise saw a record 55 brands in the movie *Transformers: Age of Extinction*.

And where does fan favourite Avenger Captain America go when he needs internet access in *The Winter Soldier*? The Apple store.

In my opinion, consumerism has gone way too far. So, the next time you are walking past a store window, just think: "How important is this item to me?" and see if that helps. I'm no pro at it myself, but sometimes I can make it through the day without stopping by Tim's.

Sometimes.

Sustainability spotlight

Earth Warrior Lifestyle



Produce bags made from recycled fabric. Photos via Earth Warrior

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 owner of the zero-waste lifestyle brand Earth Warrior, Katrina Hillyer. Answers have been edited for clarity and space.

NAITSA Sustainability Committee: *So on your website, you describe the moment when you started making reusable grocery bags and how that inspired you to create Earth Warrior. Could you tell our readers more about that?*

Katrina Hillyer: I started actually in fashion, making clothing all made from upcycled fabrics. And I got to a point where I also wanted to create items that could be used every day, not just something that we wore every day. But I wanted something like a reusable bag that reduced plastic waste, because at the time, plastic waste was just starting to become on the radar. And I figured, well, if I’m making clothes out of upcycled clothes, like out of upcycled clothing and textiles, why not also make reusable bags that people can skip the plastic bag and use something reusable? When I started making the bags, my brother asked me to make reusable produce bags because that was another item that we continued to use plastic for. So I just launched into reusable produce bags as well.

NSC: *Can you walk us through the life cycle of one of your products?*

KH: So for us, the lifecycle of our products always starts with getting textiles to be recycled. We work with corporate partners right now, and we get textiles that they can’t use.

We bring them in, we sanitize them and then we sort them into categories on what fabric can be used for what product. We have different fabric types that we use for our tote bags versus our re-towels versus our reusable makeup wipes. And then from there, we cut the fabric out, we sew it up. Then we either

load it onto our online website, we bring it to markets or we sell it through our wholesale partners.

NSC: *What is the biggest challenge that you face as a sustainability-focused business?*

KH: So in 2021, we launched a free textile recycling program for the community. They’d bring their textiles to our retail partners, where we would pick it up, clean it, sort it and turn it into new product. But there was such a huge demand for textile recycling that we were bombarded, and we ended up running out of space to store it all. Not only that, but we didn’t have the funds to be able to continue to sort it and process it and clean it. So it actually just about put our business under. We actually had to stop the program completely, and it took us a few years to actually process all of those fabrics. I didn’t realize how many people wanted to recycle and how much demand there was for it. But I also didn’t calculate when I launched it, how much it was going to cost our business to keep the program going. In total, we had about 170,000 pounds of textiles come through. And we can only make products so fast, and it only sells so fast.

Over the years, we’ve partnered with other upcyclers and resellers to help sell these materials off. But before all that, when I first launched this, I looked at one picture of what I thought it would look like. But I just didn’t expect the demand that came through

NSC: *What kind of feedback have you received from the community?*

KH: We have a lot of corporate clients, and we hear about how they are always surprised by how good of quality our products are, considering it’s made from something that would have ended up in a landfill. We’re very mindful with how we manufacture our products. We want to make sure that our customers are still getting the best quality fabric that we can give them when we make our products. So, we get a lot of compliments on our quality. We have denim bags that we made in 2018 that people are still using today. Like they have not had to repair them or they haven’t gotten ripped. I think I’ve had one bag actually get ripped in the whole 10 years. How many years is that? Seven years? Eight years? And we fixed it for them because it was such an easy fix.

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

KH: Before making any eco-swaps, use what you have first. For example, if you’re going to change out your toothpaste for toothpaste tablets instead of the toothpaste in a tube, use up every last bit of that toothpaste before you make the switch. And then after that, repairing and mending your clothing or any other item as well. If you have any electronics that can be repaired or tools, anything that can be repaired before purchasing new. If you do have to buy new, looking for secondhand items first before buying something new.

To learn more about Earth Warrior, visit the website at earthwarriorlifestyle.com. Catch up on other Sustainability Spotlight interviews at ookslife.ca/organization/naitsasustainabilitycommittee

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EASY

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MEDIUM

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HARD

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NAIT’S ANNUAL VIGIL ADDRESSES GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, REMEMBERS VICTIMS OF ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE MASSACRE

By Alleah Boisvert

The polytechnic holds an annual vigil to honour the 14 female students who were murdered at Montréal’s École Polytechnique in 1989. Students, staff and community members gathered in CAT on Dec. 5 to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on Dec. 6.

NAIT HOSTING MEN’S SOCCER NATIONALS IN 2026, WITHOUT A FIELD?

By Geono Aloisio and Roiel Carlos

NAIT hasn’t had a soccer field since 2019, but the polytechnic is set to host the men’s soccer national championships in 2026. Learn about the field’s inception in 1983, its ultimate removal in 2019 and where exactly nationals will be hosted.





Sparkling

STUDENT SUCCESS

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Thanks to the vision of Arnold Rumbold, NAIT students now have access to more support than ever.

Announced on November 27, his remarkable \$2.04 million donation builds on Arnold and Grace's legacy, supporting student awards, skilled trades, youth engagement and mental health initiatives to help students from classroom to career.

Arnold's generosity is deeply rooted in his 49-year career in the skilled trades. After growing up in a log cabin in northern Alberta, he became fascinated with a luxury: electricity. In 1964, Arnold contributed to the construction of NAIT's Tower Building (currently the Administration Building). Later, he became a respected electrical estimator and owner of a successful consulting company.

After he retired, Arnold was determined to help others succeed in the trades. Together with his late wife Grace, they established three student award endowments at NAIT. Arnold established the Arnold Rumbold Apprenticeship Award in 2007 to support female apprentices and champion diversity in the trades, then created a second bursary supporting students in emerging and applied technologies. Inspired to continue supporting diversity, Grace established the Grace Rumbold Grant in 2021 to support women or female-identifying students who comprise 25% or less of those enrolled in their program.

Following Grace's passing in October 2024, Arnold has continued to honour their shared commitment to education with a new transformational gift.

"I believe strongly in the power of a trade and that those who have built a good life from their vocation should give back to their communities," Arnold says.

Arnold is creating a legacy that will help students learn the skills to succeed and access rewarding careers for generations to come. And, that generosity is a message to every student: their potential matters.

Thank you Arnold and the Rumbold family for believing in NAIT students, for investing in our future, and for inspiring all of us to dream big and give back.



\$1,040,000

will establish the Arnold and Grace Rumbold Leadership Awards endowment, with awards valued at \$10,000 each, the highest-value award available at NAIT.



\$500,000

will support skilled trades youth engagement and mental health initiatives to help students thrive.



\$500,000

will support tools, equipment and more for the Advanced Skills Centre – the first donation received so far – a facility that will train more tradespeople in Alberta.

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