

NAIT NUGGET

Wednesday, February 5, 2025
Volume 65, Issue 6

thenuggetonline.com
@thenaitnugget



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NAITSA testing algorithm to connect students with events on campus

By Baaz Mann

A new event suggestion system launching this year may be a game changer for campus life at NAIT. Chris Black, NAITSA Student Involvement Coordinator, and his team have been working to implement an algorithm-based system to curate and suggest events for NAIT students via email.

When Black started in his role, he started doing data analytics and wondered how to better use some of that data.

— — — — —
“We had this awesome data, how can we do more with that? And how can we really enhance that student experience with the limited resources that we have?”
 — — — — —

Jennifer Sieben, Campus Life Director at NAITSA, then suggested having a feature that curates events for individual students.

Students often have difficulty finding events based on their interests, and Black knows that NAITSA is still missing communicating with some students. Therefore, the core feature of this system is to recommend upcoming and ongoing events on campus to students based on their earlier involvement history to enhance the student’s on-campus experience.

Originally, the team wanted to build a Microsoft Teams chatbot to recommend events on demand that recommends events on demand and sends regular suggestions. However, the team chose email because of a number of uncertainties in Microsoft Teams functionality.

The system is built upon two algorithms, where the first looks at the students’ history of event attendance across campus. However, if a student does not have any campus event history, the second algorithm comes into the scene to recommend campus events based on key demographic information, like the program that the student is enrolled in. Black explained that the algorithms complement each other and use a dual approach to get the desired end result.

The core developer of the project is Carlos Marquez, a NAIT student from the Bachelor of Applied Information System Technology program, who spent his practicum working alongside Black at NAITSA on various projects. While the whole functionality is built using Python, some .NET and cURL were used to deliver the emails.



Students pet a goat at a petting zoo hosted by NAITSA in September.

Photo by Skylar Boissonnault

The algorithm is being tested with over 2500 students already receiving the event suggestions. Black is happy with the results so far; the emails average a 6.87 per cent click through rate, which Black said is quite high. “You’re doing well if you’re over 2 per cent on email marketing. So we’re very happy with that, specifically because this wasn’t an email that students opt-in to.”

Black shared that their hope is to add another school to this testing program in the Winter 2025 semester. The Ooks Life app will stay reserved for more important updates for now, while there is a possibility of synchronization of these features in the long run.

The project team is actively looking for any kind of feedback on the functionality. Students who have received these emails can provide anonymous feedback by clicking the feedback survey link in any of those emails or emailing Black directly at cblack@nait.ca.

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Academic integrity: Not a want, but definitely a need

By Sukhamjit

Academic integrity (AI) may be one of the most boring topics. It is hard to get anyone to listen to anything about academic integrity, much less voluntarily read anything related to the topic. Hence, the mandatory academic integrity training on Brightspace. Yet there are some questions about Academic integrity (AI) with the growing use of things like Artificial Intelligence (AI). Maybe students confuse the two because they have the same initials.

This article is definitely not a result of the high audience demand but of the high audience need.

Academic integrity is just an extension of individual integrity in an academic setting. Like individual integrity, it is a description of individual character. And like individual integrity, organizations desire it, but it primarily benefits the individual who possesses it like a skill of their character. In the words of Renata S. Medeiros, Student Academic Rights Advisor at NAITSA, academic integrity “is the responsibility for [the] students to uphold high integrity in their academics.” It ensures accountability for students and makes sure students know what they are learning while enabling them to be the best professionals they can be.

In an institution like NAIT, with a diverse student base and varying academic practice backgrounds, many students can struggle with adapting to the academic policies. It is “mainly because they don’t know what it [the policy] is,” said Medeiros. NAIT and NAITSA have been making efforts to generate awareness among students. “But now that we are trying to make that change so that students know what academic integrity and academic misconduct is at NAIT, hopefully, it’ll be easier for them to adapt to that reality in the classroom,” explained Medeiros.

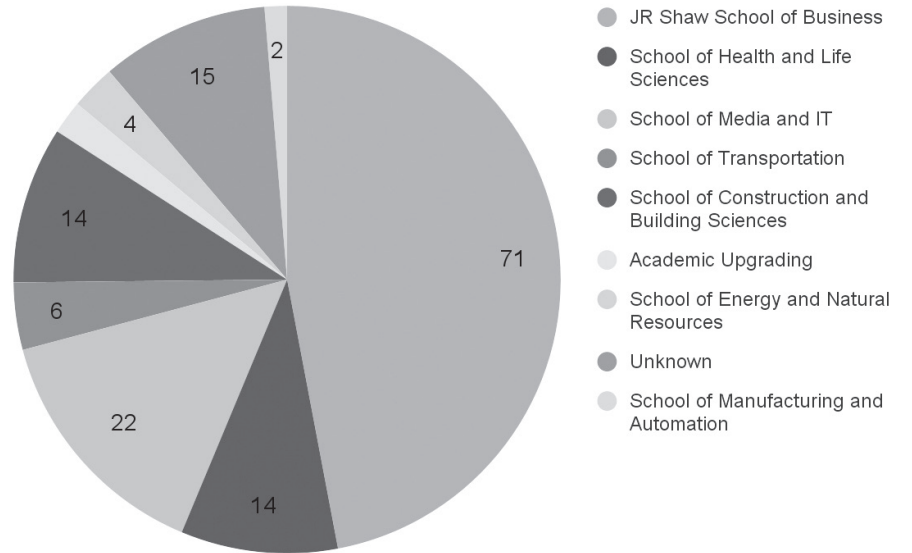
A new academic integrity and academic misconduct policy has been in effect since November 2023. Instead of academic integrity concerns going to the Student Resolution Office (SRO), they now go through an Academic Integrity Liaison. Schools and instructors also wanted more involvement, so they get to make certain decisions instead of being removed from the process. But according to Medeiros, students still aren’t as familiar with the expectations as they should be.

“There is some transition time where some expectations are not being laid out to students the way that they should be, but we’re hoping that that will be corrected within the next couple of months or within the next term.”

In addition to knowing what academic integrity is, Medeiros emphasized that students should know their rights and how the institution should respond. “If they commit academic misconduct at NAIT, they still have rights along with

A breakdown of the schools that visited Medeiros in Fall 2024.

Chart supplied



responsibilities, and the institution should follow their part in the process as well.”

If someone has violated academic integrity,, the best way to proceed from there is to consult advisors like Medeiros.

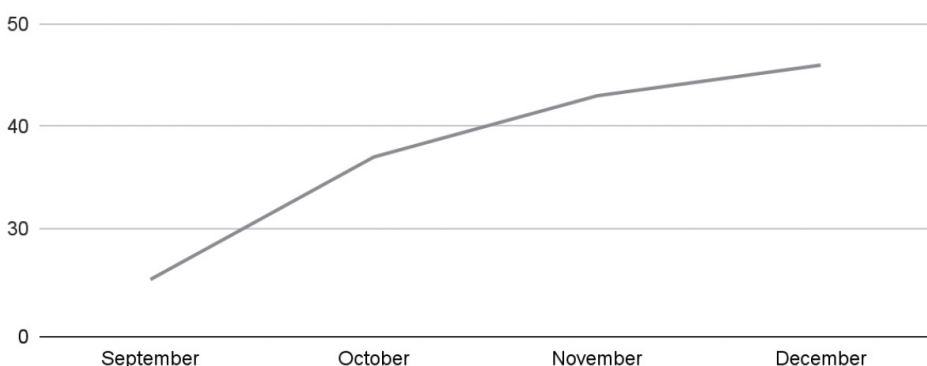
“They can come and talk to me so that they know exactly what the process is...we’ll go through the procedure together and they will know exactly what the next steps are, even if they did it intentionally or unintentionally, there is always a way to move forward,” said Medeiros.

But it’s not always easy to understand when academic integrity has been violated, especially with the growing use of technologies like AI. Medeiros didn’t fully shut down the idea of students using chatGPT, Gemini or other tools, but she did caution students to be smart about it. “Even though it’s a good technology that can improve our learning and has a lot to add to our learning, it also has its defects because it’s not a person.”

When it comes to using AI in the classroom or other rules students aren’t sure of, she advised students to talk to their instructors for clarification, or book an appointment with her. “We have very specific rules of what can and cannot be done,” Medeiros explained. “So even though there may be some times, not often, but some times, some rules where it’s not clear where it was academic misconduct or not, we still have very clear rules in place.”

“If the students think that it’s unclear and that it’s a grey area, they are not sure how to interpret that, they can first of all go and talk to their instructors. And if that doesn’t help, come talk to me and we’ll read through it together to see how we can best interpret it.”

Academic integrity is something larger than one institution. Similar to intellectual property, it is the idea of protecting ideas. Over time good things tend to be used widely, as they deserve to be, but building onto those ideas and not mooching off of them is the way to progress. The definitions and policies may slightly vary, but the idea is uniform across institutions. The level of irony of different institutions plagiarizing each other’s academic integrity policies is only matched by this article being written by ChatGPT. But thankfully, neither is true.



In Fall 2024, Medeiros had 151 interactions with students. The chart, pictured above, breaks down the monthly interactions. Chart supplied

Yes to U-Pass renewal, yes to public transportation

Editorial by Rafael Luis Flores

From Feb. 7-13, 2025, NAITSA will hold a referendum to determine if NAIT students want to continue to participate in the City of Edmonton's U-Pass program. This program is intended to provide students from post-secondary institutions "unlimited access to local regular transit as well as regional transit services." A U-Pass holder can ride for free the trains and buses of the Edmonton Transit Service, as well as the respective transit services of six other adjacent cities.

A favorable vote during the referendum means agreeing to the renewal of the U-Pass contract for another three years, which includes a gradual price increase where students will pay \$182.50 per term by year two, and \$185 by year three.

This article will explain why it is in the best interest of NAIT students that the U-Pass contract be renewed.

The obvious benefit

Every year, there are two major groups of students that enter NAIT for the first time: fresh high school graduates and international students. The vast majority of these neither own nor have access to private vehicles. The discounted fares that these students get from the U-Pass add up to substantial savings.

Let us do the math. If a student goes to and from school four times a week and that there are 14 weeks in a semester, this means transportation expenses totaling to \$420 based on a cash fare rate of \$3.75 per bus ride. Compare this to the \$185 U-Pass fee per semester and this amounts to around a 55 per cent discount. If using an Arc card, the fee will still be \$3, which is \$336 for one month of taking the bus. The U-Pass is still a significant saving.

The savings are even bigger for students who reside outside of Edmonton. For example, a student who lives in St. Albert would be charged \$6 cash or \$4.25 with an Arc card—and that's just one way. In this scenario, the discount goes up to over 70%.

Also consider the fact that students can use the U-Pass to go to other places around Edmonton and use it during the weekends. The savings add up.

Private vehicle owners benefit too

While it seems reasonable for someone to oppose the U-Pass on the basis of already owning or having access to a private vehicle, this is by no means a unanimous sentiment. With the scarce and relatively high cost of parking spaces within NAIT, I wouldn't be surprised if some car owners opt to take public transportation to attend their classes. But without a U-Pass, this option will cost more.

Future transit developments

Edmonton is a growing city in terms of both population and public infrastructure. There are currently three LRT projects in the city that are in varying stages of completion, and there are more being planned. Once these are fully completed, they will result in greater public mobility within the city.

This produces two opportunities. First, it increases the value of the U-Pass for the simple reason that even more places will be accessible. Second, NAIT's focus on education that is relevant to real-world challenges is best helped by enabling students to have constant exposure to the city where they are situated. One of the simplest ways to do this is by encouraging the use of public transportation.

Public transportation is essential

In Canada there is admittedly a fixation on private vehicle ownership that is rooted both in culture and necessity. But allowing car-centrism to solely determine the future of transportation in a city has adverse long-term consequences with regard to the quality of life of the people living in it.

According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, improving public transportation "means less congestion, faster commutes, more convenience, higher productivity and lower emissions." While individual NAIT students have little control over municipal decisions regarding transit, showing their support for public transportation by continuing NAIT's involvement in the U-PASS sends a strong message to decision-makers. This is why it is crucially important to vote for a renewal of the U-Pass contract.



Student-run tech career fair returns in Feb

By Eugene Jacob

The Computer Technology Club is hosting the second career fair for IT students to score job opportunities and meet potential employers. The DMIT will co-host the fair this year, which takes place on Feb. 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the W building.

Students will meet "top recruiters from Edmonton," looking for fresh talent outside of their company. And last year's event saw huge success—a press release from the Computer Technologies Club said that through attending the career fair, some students even landed jobs. "We've taken all the lessons learned and made this year's event even more exciting," the club said. "[There are] more companies, more opportunities and more chances for you to network and land your dream job (or summer internship.)"

The clubs recommended that students attending IT Connections should do three things beforehand: update their resume, check their attire and perfect their elevator pitch.

"No one wants to hand over a dusty old resume," stated the club. "Whether you've got a killer suit or you're just showing up with your best 'smart casual,'

make sure you look the part." They also suggested practicing selling your abilities. "This is your chance to let recruiters know who you are and what you bring to the table, without sounding like a robot."

They described IT Connections as a unique career fair. Rather than just connecting with companies and other students, students can interact with experts and learn relevant knowledge "that [they] won't find in [their] textbooks." Students can also learn what companies are looking for. "Industry leaders will be giving presentations too, so you can get the inside scoop on what employers are really looking for in today's competitive IT job market."

Yardstick Technologies, an Edmonton and Calgary-based IT management company, previously sponsored the 2024 IT Connections fair and are once again sponsoring this year's event. 2024's event, the first tech career fair, took place on Feb. 15 and had over 200 students in attendance with 10 companies looking to hire. Students can find more information about this year's career fair by heading to Ooks Life or following the clubs on social media.

Modern love: Young people choosing romance without weddings

By Jess McLaren

A growing trend is emerging in societies all over the world: fewer young people are choosing to marry. Social norms, financial pressures and personal lifestyle choices all add up to a new view on marriage, leading some to believe one should have love without signing a contract.

Attitudes about marriage are changing. Shifting priorities of Gen Z and young millennials are causing an increase in the average age of first marriage, specifically in North America and Europe, according to a 2020 analysis published by Our World in Data.

According to statistics from the National Center for Family & Marriage, marriage rates have dropped approximately 60 per cent since 1970. Today, one in six people of the millennial and Gen Z age groups have no plans to marry, as stated in a 2023 survey by the Thriving Center of Psychology.

In the past, it was an expectation to be married before living together and having children. Now, young people are choosing long-term partnerships and common law relationships in place of marriage. A study by the Pew Research Center found 78 per cent of people aged 18 to 29 feel that living together outside of marriage is acceptable, and the majority of all age groups also share this opinion.

Money is often the biggest issue for those young people interested in marriage. Marriage just doesn't seem attainable for many while tackling student debt and the high cost of living. Some experts believe trauma and lack of trust

adds to the issue, according to a Newsweek article from last February. Clinical social worker Caitlin Opland told Newsweek, "I hear a lot of fear that is based on the decision to get married...Gen Z typically wants to build their life and ensure stability." Money-conscious partners know tying the knot means sharing finances, including debt. Considering the divorce rate of 41 per cent in the United States and 40 per cent in Canada, marriage can be viewed as risky.

Aside from the shifts in norms and financial priorities, perhaps the biggest reason fewer young people are marrying is due to the rise of a new era of individualism. Increased mental health awareness and self-care advocacy is creating introspective partners. Indigo Therapy Group's blog on Gen Z dating describes the generation as one that values emotional health, personal growth and boundaries. Also, it states that many choose non-conforming, non-traditional relationships, ultimately approaching romantic love in a whole new way. Interestingly, if and when those of Gen Z tie the knot, they are expected to revolutionize marriage.

In Tinder's Future of Dating Report 2023 featured in a New York Post article, Paul C. Brunson, Tinder's global expert in relationship insights, predicts Gen Z's priorities of "personal development, emotional well-being and clear communication" will be pivotal, and the catalyst for the strongest marriages of any generation.



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FEB 25, 2025



W BUILDING



NAITSA Executive Council Election: Candidates answer 1 question

By the Nugget Editorial Team

Deciding who to vote for NAITSA Executive Council (EC) can be challenging—all students have to decide is a two-minute video, a few paragraphs in the Nugget and whatever the candidates say during their campaign period. We wanted to give the student body a bit more to think about, so we asked each candidate one question: **“What is your highest priority in office, and how do you plan to achieve it?”**

We gathered a panel of students with informed perspectives to offer some additional insight. Alleah Boisvert is the Senior Editor at the Nugget, and has voted in six NAITSA EC Elections. Kyra Chrumka is the VP Finance for the Pride @ NAIT club and an Oaks Life Team member. Danielle Libunao is a current NAITSA Senator and sits on the NAIT Board of Governors as a student representative.

The disclaimers

Each candidate was asked the same question that they did not know in advance. They were each given one minute to prepare their answers, then another two minutes to respond. Answering our question was optional. If any candidate chose not to answer the question, it will be indicated below.

VP Internal

Earl Forman

Earl’s answer focused on improving quality of life for students. He said he’d prioritized seating and outlets for students. “Some classrooms, there are just no outlets for students to plug their devices into,” he said. He discussed talking to NAIT Campus Planning to come up with solutions. Earl also mentioned adding more quiet study spaces, like potentially opening classrooms that are not being used. He also mentioned making sure all of this is communicated to the rest of the EC team.

Discussion

The panel agreed that Earl was a bit nervous but was still able to share a comprehensive plan. “Even though he seemed a little nervous, he kept pretty organized and was able to go further with what he meant by improving quality of life for students,” said Alleah. The panel had concerns about the practicality of adding more outlets in buildings that are already finished and the potential security issues of letting students use empty classrooms. But, they agreed that all of his ideas were realistic and had potential.

Teaira Current

Teaira emphasized creating a space where she can understand what the students want. “I want to make sure that the voices of the students are accurately represented,” she said. Another priority was advocating for inclusivity, equality and diversity on campus by echoing the voices and representing the campus and all the students on it accurately. To accomplish that, Teaira said she’d talk with students to get a pulse of what they are thinking. She finished by saying she wants everyone to feel heard and seen.

Discussion

The panel felt that Teaira was well-spoken and confident, though a bit nervous. However, they felt that she didn’t fully answer the question. It didn’t seem like the candidate knew the details of the role, and spoke very generally

about her plan. “She’s talking on a very surface level,” said Kyra. “There’s no real steps to how she’s going to achieve that.” The panel agreed that she has some good experience as an executive of a club, but they would have liked to see more of an action plan.

VP External

Anubhav Nundloll

Using his student experience and “feedback I’ve heard from friends, classmates, and people I know on campus,” Anubhav’s main goal is to make sure that the EC is in touch with the student voice. He mentioned that he wants to try his best to meet these needs by continuing the check-in events where students can meet with EC, along with looking into introducing an online model where students can leave feedback for EC. He hopes that this will allow the EC to be more aligned with what the student body wants.

Discussion

His answer wasn’t specific to the VP External role, said Kyra. Danielle and Alleah appreciated that he mentioned the EC, because it’s a good sign that he wants to hold them accountable. “That would be a really good quality to have on a team,” said Danielle. The panel agreed that he had a good answer for only having one minute to prepare. He is heavily involved on campus, which they said was “very positive,” but they wished he would have mentioned it more in his answer.

Robin Murillo

One of Robin’s priorities is student welfare. “That’s why NAITSA’s here, that’s why we’re here, because of the students,” he said. He also emphasized making himself accountable and ensuring he is doing well in his role. Robin would do the same for the rest of the ECs, so that they can represent NAIT students’ interests in their hearts. If elected, Robin encouraged students to approach him or book an appointment to let their concerns be known at the institutional or governmental level.

Discussion

The panel felt that Robin didn’t answer the question fully. “He has a good presence and a good voice, but I really don’t think he said anything that was super important,” said Alleah. They agreed they wanted to see more from Robin, as it didn’t seem he had a full understanding of the role. However, his background on NAITSA Senate and volunteering at NAIT is something to consider, said Kyra. Based on his article for the Nugget, Alleah felt he had an idea of what students need, but in the video, he didn’t have a way to follow-through on that plan.

Thien Vy

Thien’s priority is the students; he wants to advocate for every voice on campus. He understands students have strong opinions of a varying nature. He mentioned focusing on emerging problems that may come up in the future, along with ongoing issues in the past. Thien mentioned the U-Pass referendum and how he’s very interested in hearing what students think about it, along with encouraging students to consider their needs and the needs of others. He also highlighted focusing on satellite campuses so “every NAIT student is heard

WANT TO WATCH THE CANDIDATES RESPOND?

Find the full answers and panel analysis on the Nugget’s YouTube.



and seen and represented.”

Discussion

The panel felt he spoke well and was very confident, but that parts of his answer weren't relevant to the question. "I want to know what the issues are and how you're going to act on those issues," said Alleah. The panel appreciated his past experience working for the federal government and his experience working on NAITSA's Ooks Life Team. However, Kyra felt that she wasn't sure what his goal was, or how he would achieve it. "But he does have a persuasive voice, which I think is important in this role," said Alleah.

VP Academic

Emma Anderson

Emma highlighted three main points: quality of instruction, consistency of services and no low-cost textbook options. She said her highest priority would be a lack of free or low-cost textbook options for NAIT students. Using her time at the University of Alberta to inform her plan, Emma said she'd try and give access to things like simulations or quizzes for free on the computers at the library on campus. She also mentioned adding an option when selecting courses to choose classes that have a low-cost textbook option. Emma highlighted the difference in NAIT students' requirements as something she'd also consider.

Discussion

The panel was impressed by Emma's answer and confidence. Danielle highlighted that she spoke directly to what she included in her article for the Nugget and her reference to prior experience at the U of A. "She definitely has a plan, she is prepared to take on this role," said Kyra. Alleah felt that the issue Emma focused on is relevant for students. Danielle had one concern about accessibility, and worried that Emma's plan may not work for all schools. The panel also highlighted Emma's experience working at NAITSA's Service Hub, along with a background in psychology that may help her.

Fraser Sockett

Fraser's highest priority is to improve the mentorship programs at NAIT by working with the Business Information Centre and the current mentorship programs run by NAIT. "I'll also be using some of my experience as the CPHR Campus Ambassador to NAIT to influence and enhance those mentorship programs," he said. Fraser highlighted his experience in networking, saying that he has been both a mentor and mentee and will use his experience to build these programs. "[Mentorship] is an education that people will not get from learning in the classroom and books alone," he said.

Discussion

Danielle highlighted Fraser's connections, saying they could be beneficial in the role. The panel did have concerns with the article he wrote for the Nugget, saying that it didn't feel authentic. Fraser's video response felt more genuine, but the article had a lot of fluff. They felt that Fraser has good experience in clubs and volunteering, but they wished that he spent more time discussing how he planned to achieve his goal. The panel had questions about the relevancy of his plan; they wondered how much change he could make in a NAIT-run program.

Katherine Hawn

Katherine highlighted a few key issues: academic integrity, fair and transparent grading, mental health initiatives related to academics and representation for whatever comes next. She discussed her experience on Academic Council and working with NAIT and NAITSA. "I've been in some of the rooms that the VP Academic would need to be in already to accomplish those things," she said. Katherine would use her experience in policy and protocol development to collaborate with the necessary people, as she said it's not always students who have control over policies. "Sometimes it's the government, or the administration at NAIT," she said.

Discussion

The panel appreciated her prepared answer and knowledge of what needs to be done to achieve goals. But they wished she was more detailed, as her answer was very quick. "Based on how she speaks, it makes me feel confident that she

can get things done, but I would have liked to hear more from her," said Alleah. Danielle wished Katherine was more specific about which goal she'd prioritize in office. The panel agreed that they were all impressed with her experience in different programs and jobs and felt that would benefit her in the role.

Salinderjit Kaur

Her highest priority would be "whatever concerns that students may have." Salinderjit emphasized that all student concerns are valid. She highlighted her experience on Academic Council, saying that she has listened to concerns and made recommendations while keeping students in her heart. She would achieve her goal by having open communication with students. "I will always look at my emails or messages on whatever communication channels that we might have," she said. "I will always consider what the students are asking me." Salinderjit mentioned that students consider her approachable and that she wants to stay that way if elected.

Discussion

The panel felt Salinderjit did not answer the question and that she didn't present a clear understanding of what students are concerned about. Danielle was concerned about her promise to always answer student emails or messages, as the VPA role can be quite demanding with meetings and commitments. "It was kind of generic," said Kyra. "What more are you going to do?" The panel did highlight Salinderjit's experience volunteering, which would help her feel comfortable talking and listening to students. Her article was very confident and detailed, but they felt her answer in the video did not match that specificity and confidence.

President

Brayden Shopland

Brayden's biggest priority would be to hold NAIT accountable. He mentioned that they [the EC] noticed that NAIT pushes students' needs and issues to the side in their decisions. "They run NAIT like a business, rather than thinking about who their biggest stakeholder is," he said. "And that's the students." He emphasized issues that NAIT is not considering, like food that fits students' dietary needs or icy sidewalks. Brayden wants to continue what he's been doing as VP Internal and lead a team of new VPs, showing guidance that he found helpful as a new VP last year.

Discussion

The panel was very impressed with Brayden's answer. "He truly understands the student body, what's going on," said Kyra. They highlighted his experience as VP Internal and how he had a comprehensive list of issues that all students can relate to. The panel agreed that his main priority is relevant and topical. Danielle appreciated his desire to guide and lead a new team. The panel all agreed that he didn't explicitly say how he would accomplish this plan but felt that he displayed the confidence necessary to accomplish his goal of holding NAIT accountable.

Lilly Houcher

Lilly thought a lot about what her priority would be before running, and said her platform is built on the reason students do post-secondary: getting good jobs. She wants to promote NAIT students to the business and trade world. "I want to use my platform to be a voice for NAIT students," she said. Lilly plans to get into the business and trade world, mentioning organizations and local chambers of commerce. She was drawn to the President role because there is a team who can help her accomplish this, along with helping students have fun in school.

Discussion

The panel was concerned that Lilly's goal was more focused on student well-being after graduation, rather than students when they are in school. The panel wasn't sure if Lilly had knowledge of NAITSA and what they do for students and wished she had more experience on campus or working with students. Alleah felt her discussion of maintaining NAIT's reputation was relevant, as that is something students value, but wondered if this advocacy was already happening. They felt that she spoke very confidently and has potential to be a leader, but she lacked a clear plan.

CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT



LILLY HOUCHER
CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT

Hello fellow students!

My name is Lilly Houcher, and I am excited to be running for President in this year's NAITSA election! I am currently a Business Administration student, and I believe that education is the foundation for making career dreams a reality. Beyond academics, I'm passionate about student advocacy and am committed to being your voice and championing what matters most to YOU.

Recently, I spent over two months in Asia, which deepened my love for learning about new cultures, I appreciate that NAIT is home to students from many different backgrounds. As President, I am committed to ensuring every student feels represented and valued. It is my goal to make things better for all NAIT students, not just for a few.

Before becoming a full-time NAIT student, I worked for five years on a farm outside Edmonton, giving me insight into work in the trades. Currently, I work part-time as an administrative assistant, where I've been growing my knowledge of business and fueling my passion for working with people. Balancing work, school, and volunteer activities has taught me time management skills, and I am ready to take on the full workload of the President's role with dedication and enthusiasm! My unique perspective can accurately reflect the diversity of NAIT students.

As President, my vision is to:

- **Strengthen NAIT's reputation** in the business and trades sectors, ensuring even more employers actively seek NAIT students as top candidates.
- Prioritize **affordable transportation**, to ensure all students can commute without financial burden. Currently, the U-pass is \$180/semester, and an Arc Card is \$100/month. With the U-Pass referendum students have the opportunity to let their voice be heard. I encourage all students to vote! This U-Pass referendum affects all of us.
- Advocate for **affordable and predictable tuition** to make education accessible to all.
- Foster **engagement and connection** by Executive Council events where you can share your thoughts directly with us.

As your representative, I will use my influence to advocate for the opportunities and resources you deserve. **My focus is on what benefits you most!**

Every NAIT student has a unique story, and I want to hear yours. If we don't get a chance to meet in person, please feel free to reach out via email at Lhoucher1@nait.ca. I am here to listen and learn how I can best advocate for you.

Thank you so much for your consideration; your support means a lot to me.

VOTE Lilly for President!

CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT



BRAYDEN SHOPLAND
CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT

Hello there! I'm Brayden Shopland, your current Vice President Internal of the NAIT Students' Association (NAITSA). I'm excited to run as your next President for the 2025/26 school year!

During my time as VP Internal, I've had the privilege of meeting many of you at campus events like Orientation, NEST Fest, Clubs Showcase, Oaks Life Mixer, Heritage Fest, and Brain Freeze - the one with free ice cream! These moments have been more than fun; they've been opportunities to connect, learn, and grow together as part of our vibrant community.

With nearly a year of experience as an Executive Council member, I've been fighting for students like you. I've questioned NAIT's decisions about tuition and fees, challenged them to do better when they've fallen short, and worked to ensure that your needs and concerns are front and center. At every step, my focus has been on ensuring you are not ignored. Students are the heart of this institution - without you, there is no NAIT, yet time and again, we've seen decisions that push your needs aside. My experience has taught me how to push back when it matters most; leadership in these moments is about listening to the people you serve, not ignoring them. If elected, I'll continue this fight, ensuring that your voices are heard, and your priorities drive the decisions that shape your future.

I know NAITSA and Executive Council have more work to do. That's why I'm running for President - to lead a new team of Vice Presidents who are confident, passionate, and ready to serve you. With my experience, I'll guide them through a smooth and effective transition, help them navigate their new responsibilities, and support their goals throughout the year. Together, we'll continue improving

NAITSA's services, providing strong advocacy, and building a more connected student community without losing momentum.

If elected, my priorities will include:

- **Examining NAIT's use of student fees** to ensure they support programs, services, and extracurricular opportunities that improve student life and learning.
- **Holding NAIT to a higher standard**, ensuring campus administration and operations reflect the quality and professionalism expected from the programs taught here.
- **Observing NAIT's response and commitment** to supporting international students instead of seeing them as just a revenue source.
- **Advocating for meaningful consultation**, fostering trust, collaboration, and better outcomes for students.

As a candidate for President, I bring **leadership** shaped by my current role as VP Internal, **passion** for enhancing student life, and a clear **vision** for our NAITSA community. My **experience** prepares us to advocate effectively, my commitment to **excellence** drives results, and my **resilience** will help us overcome challenges.

During my campaign, I invite you to stop and share your thoughts with me. If we don't connect before the election, know that my door will always be open. Advocacy doesn't end when the votes are counted - your voice will always guide my work.

With leadership you can trust and experience you deserve, I'm ready to build a stronger community.

Please vote **Brayden Shopland for President!**



CANDIDATE FOR VP INTERNAL



TEAIRA CURRENT
CANDIDATE FOR VP INTERNAL

Hi all! My name is Teaira, and I'm excited to announce my running for Vice President Internal of the NAIT Students' Association. I have been a proud Ook since 2020, and during my time here, NAIT has provided many incredible opportunities and experiences that have shaped both my educational and personal growth. At this point, I would love nothing more than to give back by advocating for the student body to enhance our collective experience together at NAIT.

I'm a Visual Communications graduate of the DMIT program and am currently finishing my studies in the Business Administration Marketing program. My time at NAIT has been a journey of learning, both in and outside of the classroom. I have gained immersive campus life experience through my role as Social Media Coordinator of the NAIT Idea Marketing Club. In this role, I've been fortunate enough to build impactful connections and memories—some professional and others that have grown into lifelong friendships. Outside of NAIT, I've had the opportunity to lead initiatives close to my heart, further establish my leadership skills, and be granted awards for my work. These experiences have made my time at NAIT incredibly memorable, and I want to create the same opportunities for students to form their own impactful connections and moments through campus life, just as I have.

If elected VP Internal, my focus is to further enrich campus life by creating more opportunities for students to connect and thrive. Whether that be through on-campus events, clubs, or new initiatives, I want to foster a strong sense of community on campus. Additionally, I intend to advocate for the awareness of NAIT's extensive list of student services and resources. From mental health support to career counselling, I hope to aid in creating a strong awareness of all the resources NAIT offers to support its students.

As an individual, I am a strong advocate for inclusivity, equality, and diversity, and I am dedicated to amplifying the voices of those who may not always be heard. I want to ensure every student feels seen, valued, and supported. As VP Internal, I will continuously listen to and echo the voice of the student body to ensure our campus reflects the needs and aspirations of its students.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind students that **their vote on the U-Pass is just as important**. The current U-Pass contract expires in August 2025, and without it, transit prices could increase dramatically for students. The U-Pass vote is on the ballot before any candidate's names are even listed, and I encourage everyone to take a moment to vote YES for the U-Pass. This vote will help ensure that public transit remains accessible and affordable for all NAIT students.

Thank you so much for taking the time to consider my candidacy. I would be truly honoured to give back to the NAIT student body by serving as your NAITSA Vice President Internal this upcoming term. I hope to earn your support!

CANDIDATE FOR VP INTERNAL



EARL FORMAN
CANDIDATE FOR VP INTERNAL

Hello, my name is Earl "Leon" Forman, and I am currently a student at NAIT enrolled in the DMIT: Game Design Program. I am running to be your next Vice President Internal. My journey at NAIT began in 2023. Determined to get the most out of my time here, I joined Ooks Crew, NAITSA's volunteer team. Through this role, I worked with the Ooks Life team to support events both on and off campus. My commitment and enthusiasm for campus life were honored when I received the NAITSA Volunteer of the Year award. Later that year, I joined the Ooks Life team as an Event Coordinator, continuing my mission to enhance campus life for everyone.

You may have seen me at NAITSA events like Nest Fest, the Ooks Birthday Bash, or one of our volunteer events. My time working with and for NAIT students has been incredibly rewarding, giving me the knowledge and inspiration to pursue this leadership role. I am enthusiastic about making your time at NAIT as enjoyable and fulfilling as possible.

If elected, my priority will be to ensure your time on campus is memorable and meaningful, remembering not just the academics but also the connections, experiences, and growth you achieved here. Postsecondary education is more than just earning a degree; it is about building a solid foundation for your future while also exploring new interests and meeting people. Over the past year, Students like yourself have gotten more involved on campus and I am committed to making sure this level of engagement continues.

In addition to fostering community and engagement, I will focus on addressing student's practical needs. This includes ensuring there is enough seating and access to device outlets around campus, finding areas of concern, and creating a way for students to communicate with the executive council is another priority of mine, communication is a two street as I like to say after all. Another key focus of mine is supporting student-led clubs, which highlight the creative drive and collaboration of NAIT students, this year has been the best and I will work to ensure these clubs continue to thrive and provide valuable opportunities for everyone involved.

This election also includes the U-Pass Referendum, which affects all NAIT students. While the cost of the U-Pass will remain the same next academic year, in 2026-27 it will be \$182.50 per semester & \$185.00 in 27-28. Despite these adjustments, U-Pass remains a very cost-effective transit option, saving students hundreds of dollars annually. I'll work to address any concerns about these changes.

I am excited to meet you during my campaign and hear your thoughts on improving campus life. Whether through the halls or by email at leonforman89@gmail.com, I'm here to listen. Let us work together to make NAIT more than just a school, where memories are made, goals are achieved, and everyone feels that they belong.

Vote for me, Earl "Leon" Forman, and let me make your time at NAIT the best it can be!

CANDIDATE FOR VP ACADEMIC



EMMA ANDERSON
CANDIDATE FOR VP ACADEMIC

Who am I?

Hi there! My name is **Emma Anderson** (pronouns she/they) and I am running to be your next **Vice President Academic (VPA)** for the 2025/26 school year.

I am from a small city in Saskatchewan, ten hours away from Edmonton. I initially came here in 2018 to pursue my psychology degree and then decide to come to NAIT after for a business diploma. I am very passionate about my education and ensuring that everyone has a fair experience with their education. Some traits that make me a great fit for VPA include my extreme organization, hard working nature, friendly and welcoming demeanour, and my perseverance to complete any task I set my mind to.

What are my qualifications?

I have been in post-secondary school for 7 years so far. I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in psychology and will soon have a Business Administration Diploma in human resource management. This extended experience in school means I am equipped with knowledge of post-secondary learning, which is an asset as VP Academic.

Additionally, I have been working at NAITSA's Service Hub since I started at NAIT. My experience here has deepened my understanding of NAITSA and what issues students are facing. Working with students has required me to know which services are offered to students, how to listen actively, and have hard conversations if needed. These skills are necessary when advocating for your academic rights here at NAIT, which is why I am a great candidate.

What are my goals?

If elected, my goals would be to do the following:

- Low or no-cost textbook options

- Textbooks are expensive and often a barrier to education for many aspiring students. Other schools have no-cost textbook options as a filter in their course selection and have alternative access options for courses that still require a textbook code for simulations and quizzes. I would like to work towards starting similar programs at NAIT to help our students not worry about this barrier to education.
- Advocate for better quality of instructors
 - I would like to advocate for better training or stricter requirements to get hired as an instructor at NAIT. Instructors set the tone to any class and untrained instructors can greatly inhibit learning. I have heard of an abundance of instructor issues, and I believe advocating for better training can reduce these issues.
- Consistent Services
 - Throughout my time at NAITSA I have noticed inconsistencies between many services offered at NAIT. One example is incorrect information from the Student Service Centre regarding NAITSA fees. Inconsistent information causes extra stress to students, which affects their ability to perform well in class. Advocating for better service training is something that I would like to work on to remove these inconsistencies.

This election is special because it includes the U-Pass Referendum vote to decide if NAITSA continues to offer the U-Pass to students. Make your voice heard and **vote Emma Anderson for VP Academic** at naitsa.simplyvoting.com between February 7th and 13th, 2025.

CANDIDATE FOR VP ACADEMIC



KATHERINE HAWN
CANDIDATE FOR VP ACADEMIC

Students come first (even in my introduction)!

Welcome to NAIT, whether it's your first year or you've come back for more!

I look forward to becoming your VP Academic because I'm passionate about the student experience. I'm currently pursuing my BBA - Management, my third program at NAIT. I can't seem to stay away!

So, what would it mean for us to have me (call me Kat) as your VP Academic? My causes are the key issues that matter to you, and here's what I'd love to advocate for:

Academic Integrity

The NAIT name will always be on our resumes, so it needs to mean that we're skilled and qualified. When your credentials look good, so do everyone else's. As NAIT is bringing focus to Academic Integrity we can advocate for fair policies that protect us and our credentials.

Fair and Transparent Grading

We can't meet expectations when we don't know what they are, and we deserve an environment built for us to succeed. I advocated for fair grading at class level in my first programs at NAIT and will continue that advocacy on a larger scale as NAITSA VP Academic. With Brightspace in its early stages of use, we have a chance to have an impact in how it will be used to give us a fair playing field.

Mental Health Initiatives Relating to Academics

We have good mental health initiatives on campus, and we can do more. Mental health isn't just about resilience through hardship. Fair, transparent, accessible, and consistent academic delivery can reduce our stress load through the many hours we spend on our education.

Representation In Whatever Comes Next

With the moving pieces of a post-secondary institution, we can't always predict what changes are on the way. We *always* have a voice, so while we may not know what's next, we do know that students need to be at the front of academic decisions.

I've **represented NAIT Students** on Academic Council, Faculty Emeritus and Program Excellence Committees, and as class representative.

I've **received recognition** as a recipient of the Laurence Decore Scholarship for Student Leadership (twice!), Neil G. Hutton Award (NAITSA Volunteer of the Year), IACC Scholarship for Student Leadership and Campus Clubs Extra Mile Award.

I've **volunteered** as a NAITSA Senate Meeting Assistant, NAITSA Poll Clerk, NAITSA Grant Reviewer and Bootcamp Leader, founder/executive of multiple clubs, and more!

I have **career experience** as a Continuing Medical Education Event Coordinator, subject matter expert on accreditation, in various management positions including policy and protocol development, implementation and management, professional development, quality assurance and quality improvement, training development and delivery. I've also worked as a NAIT Technical Assistant for Continuing Education and a Tutor for NAIT Learning Services (formerly SSD), and more!

TL;DR

Students come first. I'm passionate about the student experience at NAIT. I have the drive and experience to use our voice to address important academic issues!

Vote Katherine (Kat) Hawn as your first choice for VP Academic!



CANDIDATE FOR VP ACADEMIC



SALINDERJIT KAUR
CANDIDATE FOR VP ACADEMIC

Hello, my fellow Oaks, I'm Salinderjit Kaur, and I am running for VP Academics.

I am a 2nd year student in Business Administration Program in Management. You might have seen me around the campus volunteering for various events with NAITSa, IICC, Student Life, NSO or with NAIT Peer Mentorship Program. I am proud to say, "I am everywhere". Ever since I have started studying here at NAIT, I have been involved on and off the campus, trying to learn about the organization, its resources and hone my skills like communication, leadership and teamwork and also to understand a diverse environment.

One of my best involvements is being a **Student Representative in the Academic Council** of NAIT, where my primary roles are to:

- Vote on the important matters of academic programming at NAIT
- Make recommendations to the Board of Governors about academic policy relating to the selection and admission of students, courses/ programs of study, academic awards and other academic matters.
- I am also a part of the two of the sub-committees of the Academic Council: The Honorary Degree Committee and the Faculty Emeritus Committee.

I have been serving in the council for last 6 months, where I have gained a great insight on decision-making experience of the school and how the management works, more specifically Executive Council.

Apart from that I have been a House Captain and then a Head Girl in my High school and I have also served in the Volunteer Operations Committee in the Hockey Canada. During all of these different experiences, I have understood that an open communication, trust, patience, ability to listen, being flexible, acceptance, being knowledgeable and resourceful, and most importantly respect and **empowering others** are the keys to lead.

I want to acknowledge that NAIT is rich in **diverse community**, and I assure you that I believe in **inclusivity**. I understand that if I am being elected for the VP Academic role, I will be representing NAIT Student Association as one community, as a whole. I want to advocate for whatever concerns students may have. For me, all your concerns are valid. I will stay resourceful and inclusive in my decision-making process. I have seen students expressing concerns about the lack of the availability for the classes that are in-person. I know through my experience that the Academic Council works closely with NASA, and I assure you that I will be advocating for that and any other matter that students might face and you can contact me at my email: jitksalinder01@gmail.com to express or report any query or issue you have regarding academics.

I want my fellow Oaks to vote for me, someone who is experienced and confidence. I promise I will stay approachable.

CANDIDATE FOR VP ACADEMIC



FRASER SOCKETT
CANDIDATE FOR VP ACADEMIC

Fraser Sockett: The A.C.E. of K.E.Y's for V.P. Academic—Unlocking Your Potential!

Hello, I'm Fraser Sockett, an HR student. This may not be your first time reading one of my articles in *The Nugget*, but this time, it's different—I'm here to speak as a confident and knowledgeable student leader. I'm running for VP of Academic because I'm passionate about helping my fellow students find their spark. Once you've uncovered that inner fire, I'll help you turn it into a blazing flame of success!

I'm thrilled to bring my experience, passion, and dedication to this role, and I'd be honoured to serve as your VP of Academics. Together, we can create opportunities for every student at NAIT to succeed. With my A.C.E. platform—Advocating, Championing, and Enhancing—I'll be the A.C.E. in your corner, ready to help you thrive!

Advocate for Academic Excellence

When I started at NAIT as a mature student in 2021, tools like ChatGPT weren't even on the radar. Fast-forward to today, and AI tools have become game-changers—sparking creativity in brainstorming but sometimes causing confusion in group projects. As your VP of Academic, I'll work with NAIT to improve and enhance current policies around AI. Together, we'll ensure these tools empower students and help everyone navigate this evolving academic world confidently.

Championing Student Success

The past VP Academic's have done incredible work behind the scenes, creating tools and opportunities that many students benefit from, often without realizing it.

I'm ready to carry that torch forward, lighting the path for your success—whether you excel on campus or forge your future after graduation.

Think of me as a collaborator, working closely with NAIT's executive management team to refine tools and develop strategies that drive student success. The tools for success are already here—let's make them sharper, more accessible, and ready for you to pick up and use. By fostering meaningful conversations in every meeting, I'll ensure the focus remains empowering students and shaping an academic experience that sets them up for a bright future.

Enhancing the Academic Journey

You are at the center of your academic journey, and I'm here to support you by advocating for more opportunities to help you thrive. Imagine a scholarly community where mentors guide and encourage students, networking events help you make valuable connections, and your professional growth begins here at NAIT.

Knowledge, Experience & You (K.E.Y)!

With my background as a NAITSa senator, a contributing writer for *The Nugget*, VP of Communications for the HR Club, and CPHR-AB Campus Ambassador, I'm ready to create more opportunities for students across Main, Souch, and Patricia campuses. I'm here to open doors to success, bringing strength, wisdom, and experience to guide NAIT students toward a brighter future!

Thank you for reading my message. Your vote means everything to me, and I'm ready to serve you with dedication and passion as your VP of Academic. Fraser Sockett—your A.C.E in the pocket. Got questions or ideas? Reach out anytime at Fraser4VPA@gmail.com!

CANDIDATE FOR VP EXTERNAL



ROBIN MURILLO
CANDIDATE FOR VP EXTERNAL

Hello Ooks, my name is Robin Murillo and I am running for VP External.

I'm currently taking Business Administration with a focus on Human Resources. As I began my journey at NAIT, two things were ingrained in me, **connect** and **getting involved**. These words greatly resonated to me. I was able to exemplify these by volunteering especially during orientation week. I was able to help my fellow students in navigating the school campus. As I build my connections in school I try to be an encouraging voice as well. I encourage my fellow students to seek the proper resources that NAIT has provided us and make the most out of it.

Recently with the support of my fellow students, I was given an opportunity to be part of the NAITSA Senate. Part of my role is to make sure that the concerns of students are being prioritized and I make sure that the current executive council is being made accountable for their actions. Being an elected Senator, I also had a first-hand look on how the executive council works and how they help address students concerns too.

My heart has always been passionate about achieving students' welfare and with this role, I believe this will be an excellent platform for me to continue this passion of mine.

If I get the chance to be your elected VP External I plan to advocate and prioritize for:

- Continue to build a good relationship to our external stakeholders in order to seek the best support when needed.
- Affordable and transparent tuition.
- Be a voice for both domestic and international students in the municipal, provincial and federal affairs.
- Ensure the safety of our students in our campus and NAIT LRT station
- Make sure a proper transition is made and continue the build on the good things that were accomplish.

Everyone has their own story, and I look forward to hearing yours. I am here to support you and listen. When you see me in campus feel free to approach me with questions, concerns or you can email me at robin.n.murillo@gmail.com.

Together let's make a difference and focus on our fellow student's welfare!

Thank you for your time.

Vote Robin Murillo for VP External.

CANDIDATE FOR VP EXTERNAL



ANUBHAV NUNDLOLL
CANDIDATE FOR VP EXTERNAL

Hey everyone!

My name is Anubhav Nundloll, and I usually go by Anu.

As a dedicated member of NAIT's vibrant community, I'm thrilled to announce my candidacy for VP External. I aim to foster a campus that not only meets our current needs but also anticipates and plans for the future of our growing and diverse student body.

I am from the island of Mauritius. You might have met me while I was hosting your orientation session, or handing out treats with the treat trolley, or maybe even at educational booths on campus.

My NAIT Experience:

I am currently in my 4th year of the Bachelor of Business Administration, specializing in Management. During my time at NAIT, I have been fortunate to have great learning experiences outside of the classroom, from being a volunteer and a club leader to being a student staff with both NAITSA and NAIT. I have been an International Peer Mentor, a NAITSA staff working with service hub, an Outreach and Well-being Leader with NAIT's mental health department and an International Engagement Assistant with the International and Intercultural Community Centre.

What will I advocate for as VP External?

- **Representing Our Student Body:** Your voice matters. My top priority is to ensure that every student—whether on main campus, online, international, or at our satellite campuses—feels heard, valued, and empowered. Being in touch with the student voice is essential to NAITSA's success.

- **Accessible Transportation:** I will advocate for more frequent and direct bus routes to NAIT, making it easier for students to get to campus, no matter where they live.
- **Enhancing Satellite Campuses:** I will advocate for better facilities at Souch, Patricia, and Spruce Grove campuses, including more microwaves and study spaces, ensuring that these campuses meet students' needs.
- **Prioritizing Your Success:** Success requires the right resources and the time to recharge. I will advocate for extended hours for on-campus study spaces and a full reading break in Fall. Extended hours for study spaces provide accessible, safe, and comfortable environments where students can study, accommodating those who need flexible hours. A full fall reading break offers students a much-needed opportunity to rest and reset during the semester, helping to reduce stress and improve overall well-being.

In addition, I will advocate for continued support for mental health services such as Peer Support and MyWellness. I will also support the existing initiatives that promote open education resources to help mitigate the costs of textbooks.

I want to hear your thoughts, ideas, and concerns! Please feel free to reach out and say hi when you see me on campus. You can also email me at anu.nundloll@gmail.com with any concerns.

Make your vote count. Elect me, Anubhav Nundloll, as VP External, and let's create a brighter, stronger campus for everyone.



CANDIDATE FOR VP EXTERNAL



THIEN VY
CANDIDATE FOR VP EXTERNAL

Hey there! I am **Thien Vy**, though my preferred name is **Steve**.

Allow me to rewind time to tell you **why I am the ideal candidate for VP External**.

My journey at NAIT began in 2016 in the trades as an electrical apprentice. Since then, I've been humbled by my experience as an engineering student and have now found my calling in the JR Shaw School of Business; helping individuals reach their full potential as others have seen in me. In my unrelenting journey of self-improvement, I plan to take you all with me.

Let's fast-forward to 2023 when I hit a milestone: earning a Finance diploma at NAIT. My drive to have NAIT in my life grew. I persisted by becoming an OLT member with NAITSa and continuing my education as a BBA student. During my degree, I had the opportunity to be employed by the federal government. I trained under two departments: Transport Canada and Immigrations, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Involvement with public service and catering to clients has fueled my desire to give NAIT students support they deserve. Combining my aspirations to support NAIT students with representation, I present myself as a 4th year BBA student for this imperative role in the Executive Council.

I have experience and education from municipal, provincial, and federal.

The VP External focuses on advocacy and external relations by representing students at all levels of

government. Born and raised in Canada across Manitoba, British Columbia, and Alberta, I am dedicated to advocating students' voices where they matter most. As VP External, I would vocalize students' interests and concerns throughout campus and during various government events. From my experience and education, I have seen and heard issues from coworkers and peers from all walks of life. Growth is ongoing, and I will be poised to advocate for the student body.

Your vote counts on the U-pass Referendum.

I want to address a choice for all NAIT Students. The current 2021-2024 U-Pass Agreements expire on August 31, 2025. We ask for your vote on whether we should keep or remove the U-pass agreement. Ultimately, everyone pays, or no one pays. There are strong opinions about the U-pass over the years. I encourage students to consider their current financial needs, their peers, and the value of students who require the use of transit. Your opportunity to vote will take place from February 7-13, 2025, with the NAITSa Executive Council Election.

My persistent duty to represent the students

If I am elected, I will:

- Focus on advocacy and external relations
- Represent students to municipal, provincial, and federal governments
- Address emerging student needs and goals

Thank you for reading. **Vote for Thien Vy!**

CAST YOUR VOTE ONLINE



FEBRUARY 7 - 13 AT 4PM

SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT [NAITSa.SIMPLYVOTING.COM](https://elections.naitsa.ca)

JOIN US AT THE NEST EATERY FOR THE UNOFFICIAL VOTING RESULTS, FEBRUARY 13 AT 4:45PM

REFERENDUM & VOTING INFORMATION BOOTHS

FEBRUARY 10 - FEBRUARY 13

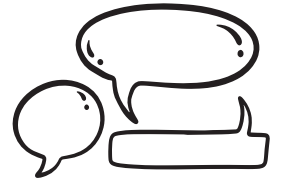
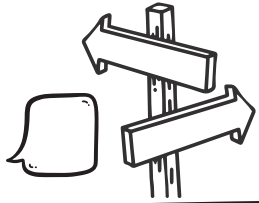
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CAT 1ST FLOOR | CAT 2ND FLOOR | PATRICIA CAMPUS | SOUCH CAMPUS

Visit elections.naitsa.ca to learn more.

naitsa

CLUBS CORNER

What students love about clubs

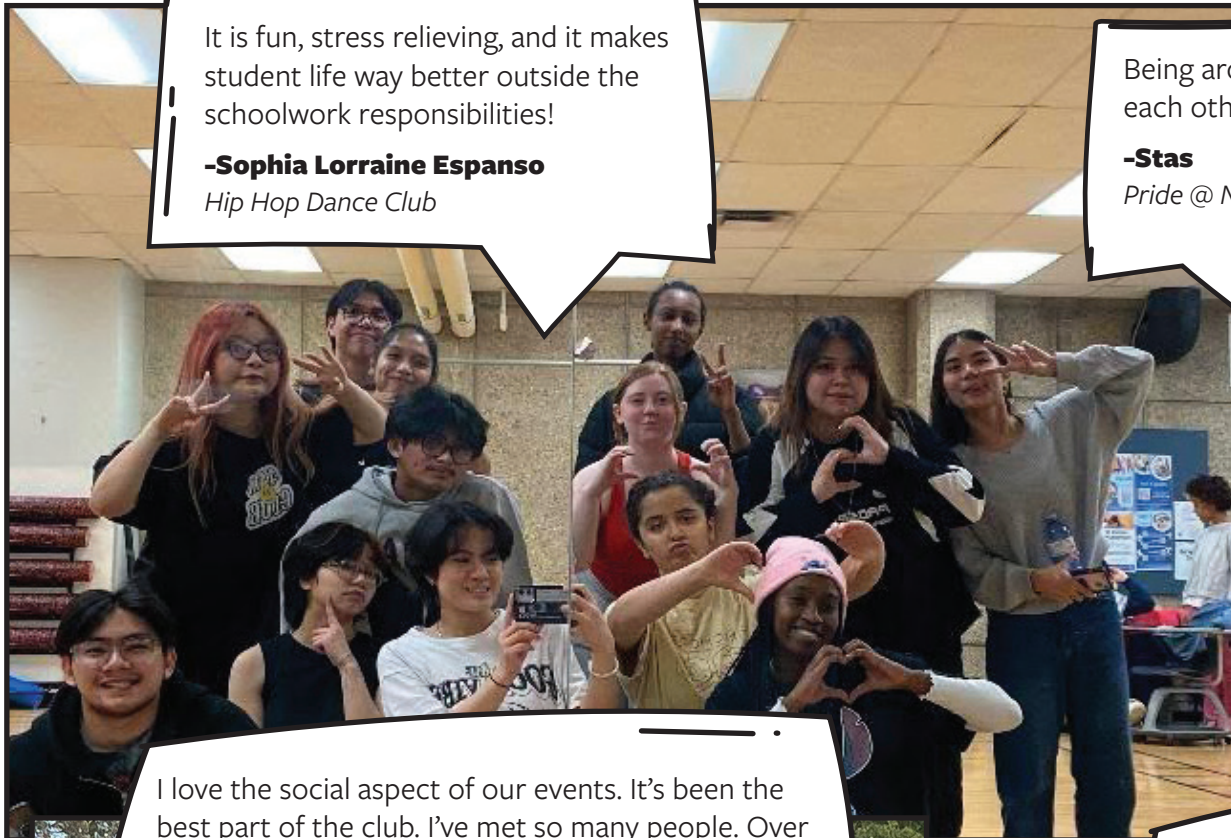


It is fun, stress relieving, and it makes student life way better outside the schoolwork responsibilities!

-Sophia Lorraine Espanso
Hip Hop Dance Club

Being around people who care about each other.

-Stas
Pride @ NAIT



I love the social aspect of our events. It's been the best part of the club. I've met so many people. Over time we've formed a core group that you see at every event and you look forward to seeing them there.

-Clive Dashcavich
Paintball Club

It provides a sense of belonging, a chance to celebrate culture, and an opportunity to connect with others. Seeing everyone happy, coming together, and supporting each other makes me feel truly grateful to be a part of it. It's more than just a club—it's a community that makes college life memorable and meaningful.

-Parneet Kaur
Punjab at NAIT



Meeting people I wouldn't normally meet, and networking with friends & industry!

-Emma Lukey
Adventure Club, ArCIDT club



A man's guide to sabotaging his love life

By Blair Garneau

The best way to cause a short circuit is not by what most people think. Everyone knows not to mix electricity with water, or mismatch a car's booster cable in the dead of winter. While obvious examples, they pale in comparison to what I'm about to write.

Tell a guy his girlfriend would find him more attractive if he were more vulnerable.

Most guys will nod in agreement until they realize what they're nodding to. Gears will spin, quadratic functions calculated. Their foreheads will drip with beads of cold sweat. A 10,000-yard glazed look will cross their face as they process a forbidden secret. Their butts will shrivel so tight, it'll suck the air out of the room. The resulting vacuum of space will be inevitably filled with their ardent disbelief.

The guys I'm describing here are the majority of my friends—and myself, for most of my adult life. I must confess that for 10 years, I sabotaged every relationship I was ever in. While I would have never told you at the time, I had girl problems. I made excuses such as “I'm in hustle mode,” or “she's crazy.” There seemed to be this erratic oscillation between isolation and dysfunctional romance. After all, you don't date the person you want. You date the person you are.

A trope among men is that emotions are weak. Weakness, as defined by these men, is unattractive. Therefore, if a man expresses his emotions to a woman, she'll find him weird and reject him. Instead, men have to be strong.

They have to read stoicism, supplement magnesium and form strong opinions against progressive politicians. They believe deadlifts substitute therapy. I know it's misguided, I just appreciate the practicality. But this isn't a practical issue, it's an intimate one.

Intimacy is associated with sex; but this definition is limiting. Sometimes described as “closeness,” one could be platonically intimate with family, friends or others. I'll offer a playful twist. Phonetically, the word intimacy sounds out as: In-To-Me-See.

It's the revealing of everything: the good, bad, ugly and beauty within us. I think here lies what men are afraid of.

If part of being human includes the bad and the ugly, presumably “weak” can be added to that list. Everyone has weaknesses. How can a man truly be himself, and be “strong” if being strong to him means being “not weak?” I don't mean to sound philosophical, but to men, these words carry weight. If a man accepts the confusing messages our culture says about masculinity, then he will aspire to repress himself.

At first, he feels something but keeps it to himself. An emotion is not to be felt, it's to be analyzed. Eventually, he doesn't feel it anymore. With each feeling not felt, he learns to tune out and disconnect from people. This is the story of the “strong silent” type. They make great engineers but terrible lovers. I'd argue that most of these men eventually self-destruct in one of two ways.

Some men learn that vulnerability is actually dangerous for them. It's



Art via Freepik

extremely hard to get “close” with them because in any relationship, a vulnerable emotion is eventually experienced. The reaction is aggression; an inappropriate use of anger to push people (and the feelings they create) away. These men are dominant, power-seeking and often the strong outspoken type. Job titles include, but are not limited to: 47th President of America. On the surface, they look strong. Beneath the facade is a lifetime of grief.

Other men adapted differently. Don't be mean, always be nice. These “good boys” put everyone else before them and hate to be the ones to make a decision.

They're soft, tender and absolutely terrified that you will do something to make them angry. They'd rather die than ask for help, say no, or push back. They're squirmy fellas whose super power is running away. They're secretly angry and don't even know it.

Which brings us to sabotage. To me, it's completely reasonable to do seemingly irrational things. See a pretty girl? Look at the floor and don't say hi. Already talking to a lot of girls but can't maintain a relationship? Variety trumps boredom. And if none of this works, certainly monk mode will. After all, the man who habituates cold showers, meditates daily and trades crypto is totally irresistible. He wants to date, but secretly needs to hide.

Albeit, a man needs finesse to emote. Like everything, some practice is in order. When he finally takes the leap to learn how, he finds out that crying won't kill him. He humanizes himself and becomes relatable.

Here's the great irony. Unlike what most men think, vulnerability actually sustains attraction. The more men can emote, the safer it is for women to reciprocate. The greater range of feelings men are comfortable with, the more women feel comfortable with men. When a man leads with his heart, he receives the love he wants. It sounds lame, but a man who is loved is a force for good. Doesn't the world need more good?

Dear Edmonton, I love you



Photo supplied

By Sanjiyven Alfred Joseph

I love Edmonton and thankfully, the love has not been one-sided. I have flown more than 12,000 kilometres to be here. Looking back, when I heard the flight attendant saying, “Welcome to Edmonton,” I knew I made the right choice. Just like a flight, there might be turbulence now and then, but I am confident that Edmonton will always make me land and live safely.

Edmonton’s biggest asset is its people. Unless you have lived here, ignore most of the rubbish that you read online. As a brown-skinned foreign student, I have been treated like an equal. Sure, there have been the odd racist or sketchy encounters, but overall, my opinions have been acknowledged and respected whenever I speak. Last summer, I coached a kids’ soccer team in Windsor Park. I was nervous because it was a new environment, and the parents of these kids were wealthy. I mean, if you dropped your kid off for training with a Lamborghini, why would you listen to a broke student who doesn’t even own a car? Fortunately, that didn’t matter. They listened and helped me in every way possible to guide these kids. I might have been a newcomer, but the parents and the kids made me feel belonged—like I was part of the team. It was one of my best experiences in Edmonton, and working with these kids and their families was a dream. The only time they were cold to me was when they dumped bottles of water and ice on me once the season was over. I would take that cold shoulder again, any time.

In this city, I’ve broken bread with some amazing people, and through that, broken my fear of being unwanted. These chance encounters have turned

pleasantries into pleasant relationships. I have been given tickets to an Oilers match, attended barbecues and even watched line dancing in a cowboy bar, all while being safe, protected and cared for. I have said this before and I will say this again, as an international student, if you want to experience Edmonton hospitality in an eggshell, visit the Nest on campus and do not be afraid to mingle. If you are scared or nervous, remember this quote by Derek, a new friend of mine: “If you are good, you are good, and if you are bad, you are bad. We do not care what race or religion you are.”

In April 2024, I wrote an article called “Is Canada welcoming?” that shared experiences from myself and other international students and their thoughts on their new country. The results were mixed; some felt safe and excited for this new opportunity, while others weren’t so lucky. I know that this city has not been as kind to many others like me, and that other brown-skinned foreign students might scoff at my love letter to Edmonton. But I genuinely believe that while there may be some bad apples in Edmonton, the bunch is not spoiled. I am proud to be a part of this bunch that makes me feel youthful, that embraces me and that seems to give more each time. Call me a simp all you want, but I am simply in love with Edmonton. While many Edmontonians call this place Oil City, one day, I hope to simply call it mine. And if my time here ever comes to an end, I will walk to the airport with a smile, doing a little shimmy while I sing, “La Bamba ... for me, for you, come on, and come on.”

I love you Edmonton, thank you.

Whispers of my heart

A childhood of assimilation and the yearning for my home culture

Editorial by Gia Amirie

Every year, Mom and Dad would take me back home to Vietnam to visit our relatives. For as long as I can remember, I hated returning home. I was accustomed to the Westernized way of life, and to be broken-heartedly honest, Vietnam was no longer my home. All the childhood memories I had as a toddler back “home” have entirely vanished.

During my long summer visits in the inescapable heat of Ho Chi Minh City, my grandma and my mom’s sisters would dote on me—love me. Despite their affection, I could never return this kind of emotion; this intensity. If anything, I felt foreign and desperate to return to my “real” home, Canada. But now, in my thirties, I often yearn to return home. I yearn to understand my family, our roots and the culture from which I was so eager to escape. Now, when I think of Vietnam, all I want to do is immerse myself in all the delicious delicacies of Vietnamese street food and submerge myself in her vibrant culture. I long to taste my grandma’s home-cooking—whitefish doused in ridiculous amounts of fish sauce. The same food I was too ashamed to bring with me to school because it was different, and I was terrified to be seen and labelled as different. I want to hear the hustle and bustle of the busy streets and the people who populate them. I want to go home.

And the more I dream of this, the more I realize that this may not be possible anymore. Time cascades quickly before my eyes as I watch the years pass like sand slipping between my fingers. I desperately try to grasp and hold onto whatever I can—a family recipe, a word in Vietnamese that I had so carelessly forgotten or my grandmother’s dotting voice. Anything that would keep me closer or keep me connected, I grasp for in vain. The time that has passed, along with all my memories, are now shadows, and the home I long for no longer exists. The sad truth is time will never wait for you. Not only is it elusive, but it can be so cruel, too.

I often teeter between two cultures—two worlds I don’t seem to fit perfectly into. Like many people of colour, I frequently battle internally with myself, asking the same question repeatedly: “What is my identity?” Oftentimes, the unexpected look I receive when talking to others is a look of astonishment. It is almost as if the perfect English I speak should not be coming from my own person, even though I have lived here all my life. During my visits back home, I am habitually labelled as “Viet Kieu,” meaning someone who lives abroad, someone who is free from the confines of an oppressive regime, someone who escaped. That is, I am Vietnamese, but not quite Vietnamese enough. So, if that is the case, what is my measure, and who am I?

Growing up visibly different, I had difficulty fitting in with my peers. At school, I always tried to fit in wherever possible, from memorizing every Backstreet Boys lyric to dressing, talking and even eating like the other students. Oftentimes, I would throw the biggest hissy fits when Mom would pack leftovers for me to take for lunch. Not only was it “not cool,” but the kids who sat with me during lunch would make fun of me. The kids would pinch their noses, disgusted, and the lunchroom ladies would do the same. I was crushed. Not because they didn’t like my food but because I was, once again, different. At the end of the school day, I would do the most unthinkable. I would dump my food in the girls’ bathroom garbage to avoid my parents’ questioning. As if being boat people wasn’t enough, now their only child was throwing away food that could feed an entire boat of people. Looking back, I would do anything to taste Mom’s cooking again.

Just like school, home life had its own pressures and expectations. After dinner and completing all my homework, I would be tasked with helping Mom and Dad translate their paperwork and bills while caring for Grandpa. On top of that, Dad was never home, and when he was, he was angry all the time. Growing up was exhausting, and the possibilities afforded to my peers were dwindling for me. Do you remember the movie *The Mask*? It was played everywhere during the 90s. It was a movie about being able to transform and be completely



Photo supplied

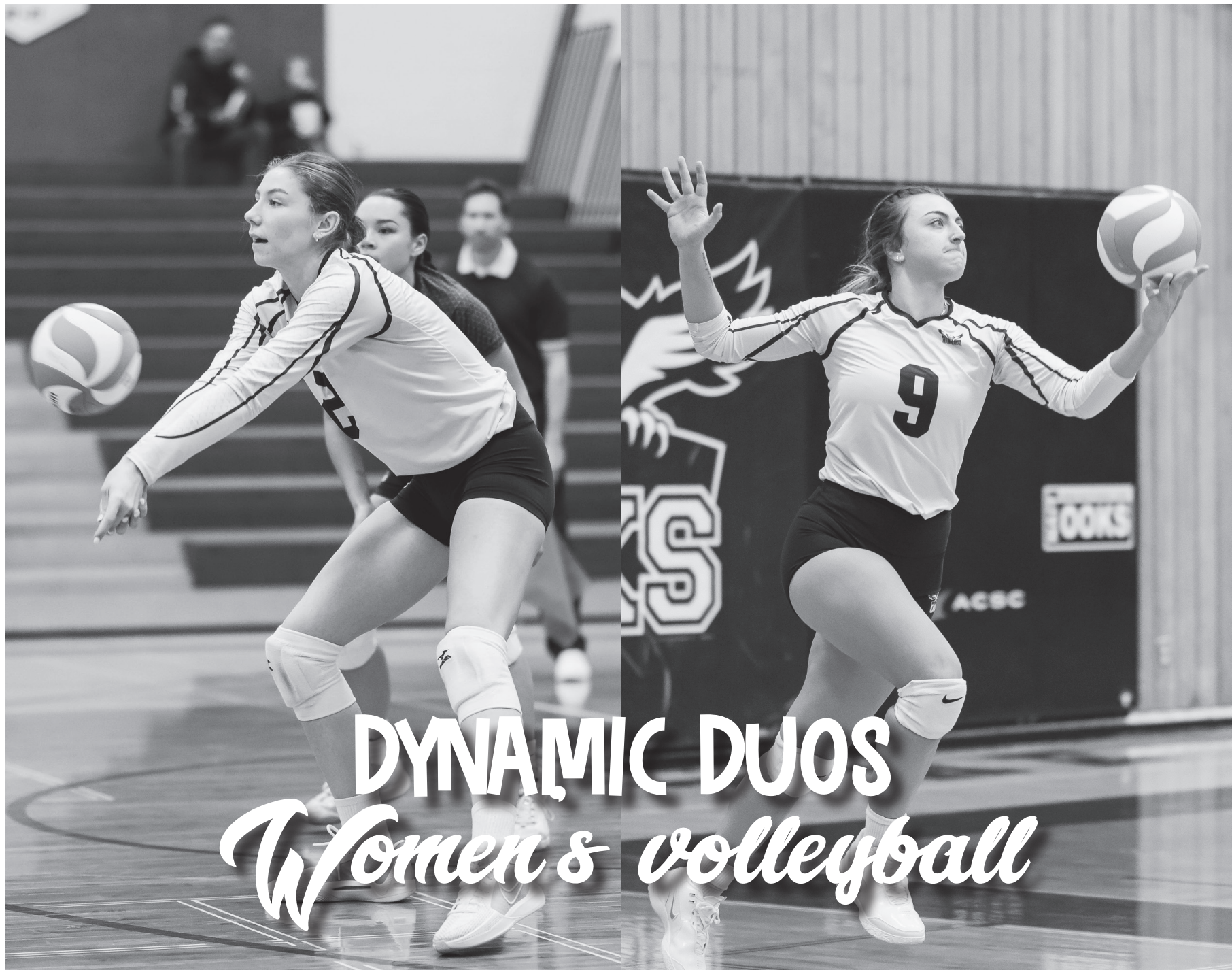
different from the self you presented to the world. And despite my difficulties understanding English then, the emotional undertones of the film were clear as day to me. Like in the movie *The Mask*, I felt I had to change myself and my personality to be what everyone else needed. And I became very good at masking. You would have never known how broken that child was underneath that smile. It is so hard to live up to an impossible standard that many people, especially people of colour, are still trying to achieve to this day.

Mom would often reiterate the importance of assimilating. On the weekends, she and I would spend hours sitting together while I recited articles from the Edmonton Journal until my English reached her standards of perfection. When I was young, she and Dad would speak Vietnamese to each other privately to avoid influencing my English. But it wasn’t just the language. Mom persistently reminded me the importance of being thankful. “We must be thankful that the people of Canada and Canada itself have accepted us,” she would say. In other words, we are indebted to our saviours. A debt so great that it is impossible to pay back.

For the longest time, I was thankful, and I still am very grateful for the life I’ve had. But as I matured, I often questioned myself, asking how I could be thankful for a country that was involved in the devastation and destruction of my home and the very community that surrounds us to this day. A war so immense that even now, it continues to coexist within us, within me; beyond borders, despite ending decades ago. And why, as people of colour, must we be forced to reconcile our grief behind a mask of gratitude when we have lost so much already?

Dispossession is the culprit that creates a ripple effect throughout generations. To be dispossessed is to have land, culture, language, and other possessions taken away from you, only to have your loss obscured behind a label of acceptance. Dispossession frays and soon destroys the very fabric that holds us together. It creates a layer of silence, a complexity that is not easily defined but felt by those who share the same loss. I know this because this silence is all I feel, reverberating loudly when I look into Mom’s eyes, and now, my own. It is something that is said without needing to say anything at all. A silence so tangible it carries the weight of our ancestors, their traumas and all the pain and hardships passed down from one generation to another, delicately woven and blanketed over me. I shoulder this silence, but so do other people of colour, too.

I still ponder my identity. This thought pops into my mind from time to time, randomly. And my grief swells a little more with the Lunar New Year inching closer. I don’t know if I will ever rediscover my identity. And as members of my family leave me and this world one by one, they take with them their silence—the secrets I will never know or truly understand. But one thing I do know for sure is that I am thankful, although this thankfulness I hold now is on my own terms.



DYNAMIC DUOS

Women & volleyball

Rachel Mallet (left) is a first-year standout; Lexi Gedney (right) is in her second season and dominating assists on the women's volleyball team.

Photo by NAIT Oaks

By Geono Aloisio

In the month of February, playoffs are at the top of every student athlete's mind. The Oaks are hunting for the playoff spot in the final month of the regular season, and the women's volleyball team could land in the playoffs for the first time since 2019/20. Second-year star Lexi Gedny and first-year standout Rachel Mallet are two contributors to the team's success this season. The Nugget sat down with both players to learn how they feel the year has gone and their goals for playoffs and beyond. *Responses have been edited for clarity and space.*

Q: Lexi, you are in your second season, and Rachel, you are a rookie. How do you both feel this year went?

Lexi: In terms of team dynamic, we're definitely a lot closer this year. It helps that we're winning, and we obviously didn't win a lot last year, and that has helped the team dynamic. It's been fun this season. [Head coach] Erminia has been a lot different. Our practices have been a lot more competitive. So it's been pretty sweet.

Rachel: I have really enjoyed it so far. I think the team has passed my expectations. So I think that's been really exciting to be apart of. I knew the team last year wasn't great, but I think that's been extra fun because we've been winning.

Q: Lexi, you lead this team in assists and are second in the league for assists per set. You also did this last year, finishing in the top 10 for assists in the North division. What do you feel is behind the increase in your production this season?

A: I think the overall team has gotten better. I can't get an assist with a nice pass without Rachel putting the ball away. I am kind of the middleman. So yeah, definitely improved passing and improved hitting has helped my game.

Q: Rachel, you lead the team in kills and are in the top five in the league for kills. How have you been able to make such a huge impact on the team despite being a rookie?

R: I think being on past teams that have had the same competitive level, especially the expectations I put on myself, I think I've always held myself to a really high standard. So, I am always making sure that I'm meeting that expectation and even passing it.

Q: 2019/20 was the last time the program made the playoffs, and you have to go back to 2012/13 for the last time the team won a medal. Do you think this year, the team can qualify for the playoffs?

L: We all want it for ourselves and for the team. Whereas last year, when we're out, it was kind of like, how big of a shot did we think we had. We were always trying to play catch up, so I'd say it's an expectation to make the playoffs this year for sure.

R: I think we all know the potential that our team has, and I think we all know the talent that every player on and off the court brings. And I think if all of us can step up our game and do our jobs, we can make it to the postseason.



DYNAMIC DUOS

Men's basketball

Omar Farah (left) and Peter-Aluk Deng (right) are two rookies leading offence on the men's basketball team.

Photo via NAIT Ooks

By Geono Aloisio

Playoff basketball is right around the corner for the men's basketball team, and it's been a long time since they have been in this position. They currently sit second in the division and could finish in first—something the team hasn't done since 2017/18. Two first-year stars, Omar Farah and Peter-Aluk Deng, are taking the reins on offence, so we sat down with them to learn more about their season and where they believe the team can go. *Responses have been edited for clarity and space.*

Q: Omar, you are one of the best three-point shooters in the league and lead the team in points per game. How have you been able to make such a huge impact on the team despite being a rookie?

O: To be honest, it's just confidence. I think my confidence doesn't shift when I have bad games and good games. So, I am still going to take the same shots, and I have teammates like Peter and the rest of the guys encouraging me to keep scoring and to keep shooting...being a rookie doesn't really make me feel any different. I feel confident in my ability regardless of my age or the years I've played.

Q: The men's basketball team hasn't finished second or higher in the division since 2017/18. But the team is currently second and could finish first. Do you think the team can achieve that?

O: I think our team is the best team in the conference. But we're on a good roll right now. We played a lot of hard games, so we learned how to deal with adversity, and I think it should be a lot smoother for the rest of the season.

P: I personally believe there's not a goal that we can't achieve as a team. I think we can come first place. We had a good unit this year, a great coaching staff and a very high team morale, so we can definitely finish in first place.

Q: What does it mean to you to have fans in the stands?

O: It means a lot, especially when you see a lot of people supporting you at the games. It encourages you a little bit more, and it just makes the environment better. It hypes the team up and pushes the team up, too.

Q: Peter, you were one of the assists leaders on the team and are second in points per game. As a rookie, what has allowed you to make a huge impact?

P: It's just being confident in myself and having teammates that allow me to be myself, especially with the system that we play in; it helps me to play my position freely. As for the assists per game, I pride myself in helping others become better, so I enjoy sharing the 'rock' (the basketball).

Q: Your teammate Omar is one of the best three-point shooters in the conference. As one of the assist leaders, do you think your play styles complement each other?

P: As I said earlier, I'm a selfless player and tend to play well aggressively. So every time I see that we need to put up a point and I'm playing at point guard, I look for Omar or I look for my big man Antonio Benjamin. I try to find him as many times as I can and try to facilitate the offence as best as I can.

mouth things OFF



WHAT'S YOUR BEST PICK UP LINE?

Photos by Skylar Boissonnault

Well, here I am. What are your other 2 wishes?

-Chris Maja

Heavy Equipment Technology

If I was a pizza delivery driver, I'd be giving you the tip!

-Anthony MacDonald

Business Administration, Marketing

Every Saturday I decide to quit alcohol after 3-4 shots of vodka.

-Loveleen Kaur

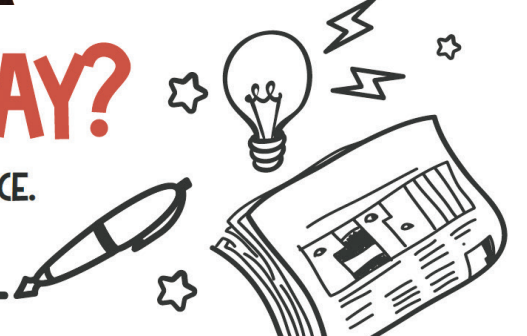
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Chemical Romance: Biohacking love with hormones

By Matthew Van Erp

In previous articles, I've written about how biohacking is used to maintain health through nutrition and fitness, but there's more to this weird science than meets the eye. Biohacking not only affects physical performance and well-being but also how individuals are attracted to each other. Some attractions are conscious choices, based on one's values and preferences. However, many go beyond this.

The 4 hormones of affection

Out of the many hormones in the body, there are four that greatly impact how we feel: dopamine, endorphins, oxytocin and serotonin. Each has its own independent role and can affect how we feel day-to-day. Here's how they work.

Dopamine

Dopamine is the feel-good neurotransmitter. It is a hormone that drives desire and pursuit. In a relationship, it can drive a person towards a particular type of partner or other types of enjoyment and outcomes.

Endorphins

Endorphins are also known as endogenous morphine. They are pain and stress relieving hormones normally associated with the "runner's high" but can be released with other types of exercise, including sex.

Oxytocin

Oxytocin is another positive feeling hormone and is known as the love hormone. It is released with physical touch, holding and hugging. This hormone is critical for parental bonding, mental health and, of course, developing a bond with your partner.

Serotonin

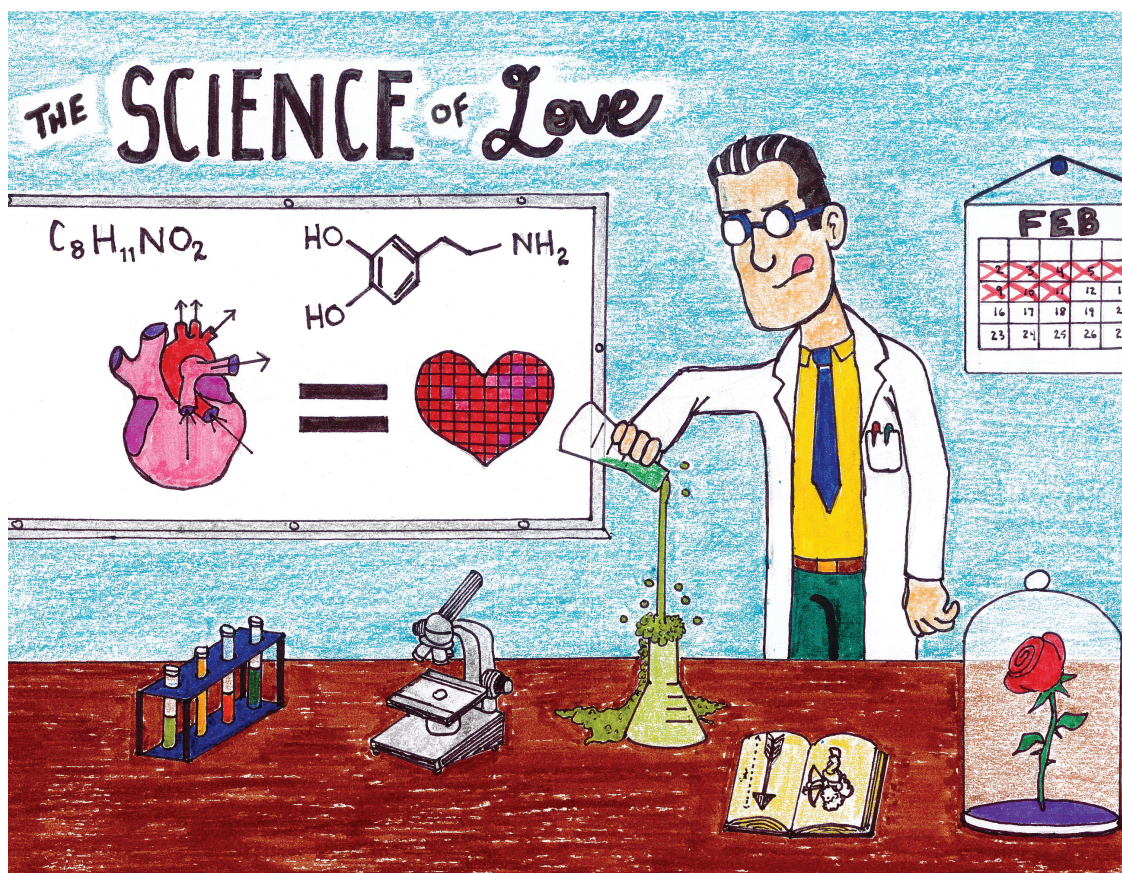
Serotonin is used by the body for several functions, from breathing to sexuality. It is commonly known as a feel-good hormone, and not enough serotonin can potentially lead to depression and anxiety.

Each individual has different hormone levels, and the good news is that they can usually be manipulated with good nutrition and exercise—this manipulation is the essence of biohacking.

Cortisol synchronization

Have you ever felt stressed and noticed your partner is becoming stressed as well (or vice versa)? This might be a chemical response towards your partner's stress rather than stress itself. This is called cortisol synchronization.

Cortisol is also known as a stress hormone and is used by the body to accelerate the use of energy in times of stress. A 2013 study published in the *Journal of Family Psychology* observed that there is a correlation between



Art by Dave McCargar @buenoinnuendo

the stress of one partner and the other. More interesting is that an increase in cortisol from one individual correlated with an increase of the partner's cortisol levels the next day. It was also obvious that this level changed with the strength of the relationship—better relationships mean less stress.

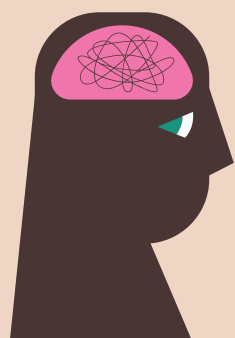
The biohacker's approach

Testing to figure out how things interact with each other and work is what biohackers do. To conduct your own testing, a research partner is highly advised—especially if you're biohacking to improve your sex life. Yes, I am saying that you should have sex, for science.

Tim Ferriss, a well-known biohacker and author of the book *The 4-Hour Body*, does just this. In the chapter "Improving Sex," Ferriss documented his experience with an orgasm specialist. From his research, he highlights that sex resulting in orgasms is part connecting and part physical skill, with a whole lot of self-love and confidence. Ferriss also wrote "the upper-left-hand quadrant from [the woman's] perspective, around one o'clock from the man's perspective." I will not get into much detail on this; it is a chapter you have to read for yourself, if you know what I mean.

Tying it together

We know that different hormones impact feelings of affection. Overall, taking care of your physical and mental health—whether it's through biohacking or other methods—can be key to sparking the chemical romance you're seeking.



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The ups and downs of casual sex

By Hugo G. Diaz

Casual sex is part of the student life. In many studies on the prevalence of casual sex by age group, the 18-30 age group is most often mentioned. According to the Kinsey Institute, over half of young adults claimed “their most recent sexual partner was a casual or dating partner.” In Canada, 18-34 year olds were found to have sex most often and have the highest number of sexual partners, according to a CTV/Angus Reid poll. . This is no coincidence. Once we leave the family home to become adults or young adults, sex becomes, along with many other things, part of the choices we have to make. And as such, it requires a certain level of learning and responsibility.

This article is not intended to encourage or discourage anyone from doing so. One’s individual decisions and motives for having sex or are personal, but they are also influenced by many different agents. Culture, beliefs and values are little fairies that flit around in our heads when we are making decisions. This is why respect and consent are important to consider at all times.

The ups

Probably one of the most exciting things about casual sex is its nature. Bordering on the forbidden and dangerous, we feel like spies in an action movie and once the encounter is fulfilled, we may imagine ourselves as the main character of the latest romance novel.

Casual sex can help with our self-esteem and improve our self-perception, as it can make us feel good physically and emotionally. It makes us feel valued and that we are receiving a certain level of attention. It gives us the opportunity to experiment with our sexuality without having to think about commitment. And if you are still trying to decide whether you want something serious or not, casual sex could be an option. It is an important decision that can give you a sense of independence and adulthood.

The downs

However, casual sex is not all fun and games. Just as it can be good for you emotionally, it can also have emotional consequences if the casual encounter turns out to be not so casual. Not everyone is ready to separate the physical from the emotional. For many, sex is closely linked to love, and that can have implications. You may feel rejected or jealous for not receiving the affection you thought you would find. A one-night stand can become messy if one does not know how to deal with having to see the other person again in different situations.

Another common problem is difficulty communicating. In a casual encounter, people may not talk about their expectations or limits. This can lead to misunderstandings if we are not on the same page with the other person. We don’t know how deeply the other person will feel or whether we will be able to keep it “casual” ourselves. Even when both parties agree to keep it casual, emotions are difficult to predict, and someone could end up getting hurt.

We also have to consider the social stigma and cultural aspects. NAIT is like a mini planet, where many people from different places coexist. Most of us come from different cultural backgrounds, and while on the surface the attraction may be there, our package of values and beliefs are a backpack we carry with us at all times.



Solo dating by Ana Kostyrko @ana.with.a.camera_

These things are often so deep-rooted that they are difficult to leave behind.

The most important risk is the possibility of contracting a sexually transmitted disease or the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy. Using protection is important and should not be a matter of discussion, and condoms are reliable and accessible. According to Planned Parenthood Toronto, “only condoms (external and internal) protect you from both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).”

So...is it worth it? It’s up to you to decide. If you are open-minded and know what you are getting into, casual sex is an opportunity to experiment and expand your self-knowledge. However, if you think your emotional side might betray you, there’s nothing wrong with a more committed and exclusive relationship. Responsibility and common sense are key. Always keep in mind that we should act according to our values, and saying no is a choice that should be respected.

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CAT reflection by Noura Eltinay



The Ook poses with a student at the Ooks birthday bash.

Photo by Mathieu Durnford

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