

# NAIT NUGGET

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# Employed AISH participants soon to ADAPt to change

Editorial by Samantha Lajeunesse

Starting in July 2026, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) participants will have to undergo a new application process and evaluations to determine whether they can stay on AISH or a new program, the Alberta Disability Assistance Program (ADAP). AISH exists currently to allow Albertans with disabilities the ability to live independently regardless of their ability to work. ADAP is being created to allow Albertans with disabilities to “receive the support they need while pursuing meaningful careers,” according to the Government of Alberta.

### What is ADAP?

Those who can to work are currently getting small deductions based on that pay period’s income. The new program will see the monthly living allowance go from about \$1901 to \$1701; however other details regarding individual benefits and coverage of ADAP have not been made clear.

The only real information participants have received is the loss of wages. As a fully able-bodied citizen, I cannot fathom how the Alberta Government can justify calling that small monthly income a livable wage. Maybe the Alberta government should supplement the difference from their own paycheck?

Andre Poitras is a current AISH recipient and wants to come to NAIT to learn a trade. Poitras said he doesn’t agree with ADAP and worries what would happen if he were transferred to the new program.

“If my medical problem gets more severe or things change, I would have to reapply to AISH,” he said.

Poitras noted the process can take upwards of eight months, which would have the disabled recipient unable to have income support. If he’s moved to ADAP, Poitras said he would have to work more to make up for the income loss, “which would put more of a strain on [his] body.”

Tammy Mooney, an AISH recipient and CDI College graduate who works as an Educational Assistant, said the changes make her feel “confused, frustrated [and] scared.”

### A lack of clarity

This seems to be a noticeable trend among AISH recipients. If they are moved to ADAP and can no longer work in the future, it’s unclear what the process to get back on AISH will look like.

It’s also unclear what kind of employment support ADAP will provide. With Alberta’s unemployment rate sitting at 8.4 per cent — the second-highest unemployment rate in Canada — most able-bodied students are already worried about finding a job after graduation.

“It’s very rare that a person on AISH can find an actual career,” said Poitras. “You can find a part-time job but finding an actual career to try to make something better of your life and for yourself,” that’s where the struggle comes

in, Poitras explained.

I can barely deal with the stress of school, work and living costs without even being on AISH.

Disabled students need to be able to focus on school; they shouldn’t have to worry about losing medical coverage if they have some ability to work but can’t find employment after graduation.

For that matter, a lot of people with disabilities people are born with their disabilities, and the government dropped the ball on their care. Why do they have to suffer for the government’s lack of sympathy and support?

### Case workers may be a thing of the past

Recent changes to AISH have had the participants not only lose benefits and wages, but also their own individual case workers. AISH was widely based on a case-by-case basis, with each recipient only ever discussing any concerns with a case worker who was familiar with their own specific file.

However, last spring, AISH recipients reported hearing that individual case workers would be replaced with a “team.” Recipients are expected to call a hotline and wait for an available representative.

When Mooney wanted to go back to school, she talked to her case worker at the time. “She put me in touch with student finance, and I was able to get complete funding through them with two different grants,” she said.

AISH recipients who are in school or planning on going back to school may not struggle at the beginning if they receive funding. However, as Mooney stated, “I’m tasked with paying that back.”

Let’s keep in mind, AISH recipients are not guaranteed work after college. Can you picture finishing your degree, then being stuck with student loans and no hope or answers whether you can pay it back?

As you can only apply to AISH if you are over the age of 18, students going on AISH and ADAP will be of college age and will have to consider priorities in the future if they are to go to school.

Paying back student loans may not seem too difficult to swallow, but AISH recipients get deductions from their paycheques if they have worked a certain amount.

Another frustration among the crowd is that if they can work a lot one day, they could be kicked off AISH simply by having a good health day. As a student, imagine you have finished school, found a career and finished the required education to find that career, just to find out that none of it matters.

Can you imagine not only being unable to earn enough money to pay your student loans, but you get a lifetime supply of medical problems stopping you from living an almost normal life?

I sure can’t.

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# Students celebrate teamwork with 50th anniversary bridge building contest

By Dylan Nicholson



Photos by Dylan Nicholson

One of the last places you may want to find yourself is dangling from a rope over the frigid waters of Whitemud Creek on a crisp fall day in Alberta. However, that is where over 60 NAIT students found themselves on the morning of Saturday, Sept. 27.

Four student teams composed of members from NAIT's Construction Engineering Technology Student Club (CETSC) and Civil Engineering Society, and two industry teams from PCL and JEN COL competed in NAIT's 50th annual Gary Stroich Rope Bridge Building Competition.

The competition involves two teams of 15 people racing to establish a rope suspension bridge used to traverse the width of the creek located in Edmonton's river valley.

The competing students must complete 30 successful crossings. The challenge also requires a roundtrip across the bridge with two members transporting an eight-foot-long, 40-pound bundle of dunnage — essentially a big bundle of insulation.

*“Any event you can go to where you can communicate and build relationships, that’s what construction is. It’s all about building relationships and talking to people.”*

The teams are racing for the best time and must complete the required crossings within 30 minutes to qualify for the final race. The winning team earns the Challenger Cup and bragging rights for the remainder of the school year. The PCL and JEN COL teams kicked off the competition, setting the example for the student teams to follow.

Riley Doyle, President of CETSC and a second-year student has participated in the event twice now. Both times he was a Team Captain.

“This whole event is based on teamwork. It’s crucial. If you’re not talking to each other, you’re not going to do well,” said Doyle.

“Any event you can go to where you can communicate and build relationships, that’s what construction is. It’s all about building relationships and talking to people.”

His sentiments regarding teamwork are undeniable to any of the many spectators that arrived to watch and cheer on the competing teams.

The event also provides a unique opportunity for students to meet and network with active industry professionals. “It’s a chance to meet industry, see that they are only people, build some relationships,” said Ken Williams, the Chair of the Construction Engineering Technology program. “It’s just a team building event, but it brings into consideration their project planning, their execution, their teamwork ability and personal development of skills.”

“The soft skills that don’t really get taught are hard to teach, but are critical in performing group work,” said Williams.

Tanisha Patel, the Team Captain for the Civil Engineering Society’s team, believes the event is a great way for students to get out of their comfort zone and get used to working with others. “It’s a good exposure to how the industry is going to look like in the future,” she said. “Everybody should give it a shot once.”

The event also serves to memorialize the late, longtime NAIT instructor Gary Stroich who died suddenly in the spring of 2021.

“Gary [Stroich] truly was the heart and soul of our program,” said Williams.

Williams remembers Stroich as a very involved and passionate Instructor within the Construction Engineering Technology program.

“The best way to remember Gary was to rename the event.”

In the end, the CETSC team honoured Stroich’s legacy, defeating the Civil Engineering Society team in the final race and earning themselves the 2025 Challenger Cup.





# Student housing could grow with new city initiative

By Avalina Zenari

A recently introduced incentive from the municipal government could facilitate the development of more student housing for NAIT students.

As campuses across the city continue to grow steadily, post-secondary students are in need of housing to support their educational and financial growth. The Downtown Student Housing Incentive is a pacesetter. The program is the first of its kind in Canada and is intended to increase the amount of sustainable and affordable student housing around Edmonton’s downtown core.

NAITSA Vice-President External Robin Murillo said this is welcome news for students. “It’s a good initiative by the city,” he said. “It’s needed. Not only for us NAIT students but also for Greater Edmonton area students because housing is a real concern.”

### Housing remains an issue for Edmontonians

According to the City of Edmonton’s Affordable Housing Needs Assessment, there is a growing need for housing within the city as the population continues to grow and market rates increase.

The assessment found that “those in the lowest income bracket cannot afford any rental units in Edmonton at market rents without a deep subsidy, and there are very few rental options for households earning less than \$45,000.”

Through this program, the federal government, through the Canada

Mortgage and Housing Corp.’s Housing Accelerator Fund, will provide \$15 million to the city. This funding will allow the municipality to develop an estimated 500 student housing units with no city tax dollars spent on the project. Additionally, the funding will provide a boost to the city’s downtown revitalization efforts, which have been substantial in recent years with the redevelopment of the Ice District and revenue brought in by economy-boosting live entertainment and events.

*“Building houses can be complicated and you can’t do it fast. It takes years, but at least we’re starting this conversation.”*

The deadline for applicants to have a building permit for their submitted project is November 2026, as advanced planning and timing are key to successfully achieving an initiative of this magnitude.

The criteria for approval include meeting the average rates of the rental market and being located within the core of downtown Edmonton. Unfortunately, this leaves housing for current NAIT students through the Downtown Student Housing Initiative off the table — but according to Murillo, the polytechnic has its own plans for student housing in the works.

### NAIT residence in progress

Murillo explained that student housing on campus would be especially valuable to trades and apprenticeship students who only need to stay on campus for a short period of time, which makes accommodations more difficult to find in the regular rental market.

“When I did my tour when I was campaigning, this was really a concern, especially for trade students, apprentice students in general,” said Murillo. “Apprentice students do go to NAIT for only eight to 12 weeks. So, how can you get housing or an apartment for rent that will grant you just two to three months?”

As NAIT students continue to push for housing on campus, conversations surrounding possible solutions are being had among NAIT executives. Student housing falls under the jurisdiction of Mike High, the Vice-President of Administration and Chief Financial Officer, and his team. Collaborative efforts have been made over the last 10 years to establish a plan for student housing, but the process is not as simple as it may seem.

“Yes, it involves money, at the same time it involves the city in terms of not only planning, but gathering permits and whatnot,” said Murillo.

“So meaning if I do have a plan, I do have the funds, but the city doesn’t approve what I want to do or what NAIT wants to do, it can also delay the construction,” Murillo explained.

Murillo said that NAIT uses a request for proposal that needs to be completed before these types of large projects can be started. “NAIT is not a private entity. We are a publicly funded institution, so it needs to have this type of process,” he explained.

NAIT has already identified a land where the housing would be built in the Blatchford area where the old airport once stood. NAIT is looking for a third-party partner to manage this housing.

In his work as VP External for NAITSA, Murillo plans to continue advancing discussions with partners surrounding student housing on NAIT campus. “Building houses can be complicated and you can’t do it fast. It takes years, but at least we’re starting this conversation.”

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# Is NAIT's Academic Integrity Training letting students down?

Editorial by Rafael Luis Flores

As someone who has taken the NAIT Academic Integrity Training module three times now, I have some serious doubts about its effectiveness.

The NAIT Academic Integrity Training is a course available to all students on NAIT's learning management system, Brightspace. The training is a "requirement" for students at the beginning of each academic year.

In its latest version, its welcome note says: "The NAIT Academic Integrity course is aimed at helping students understand the importance of academic integrity, how to avoid academic misconduct, and the key elements of NAIT's policies and procedures related to academic integrity and academic misconduct."

The whole point of the course is the prevention of academic misconduct, such as cheating. But does it really help do that?

I am wrapping up my second year at NAIT, and I've lost count of how many exams I have written where I witnessed classmates attempting to peek at my or someone else's paper, or someone pretending to ask the exam proctor a question while their buddies take advantage of the distraction. I do not have the statistics, but it certainly seems the course does nothing at all to curb academic misconduct.

Having taken the course recently and being able to compare it with its past versions, I think there are a few reasons for its apparent ineffectiveness.

## Reason 1: It doesn't get straight to the point

When making students take an online course, there is only a small window of opportunity at the start to capture their attention before they get bored and decide to move on. For a subject like academic integrity, going straight to topics like the consequences of academic misconduct would be ideal because these are concrete things students can actually experience.

*"Unfortunately, I do not believe improving the course content will make a dent in the rampant culture of academic misconduct at NAIT."*

With this course and its past versions, however, the very first topic is a winding lecture about "Exploring Values," which is as boring as it sounds.

Now, I understand how it might be important to show how one's personal values and NAIT's values of accountability, respect, collaboration, creativity and celebration all relate to academic integrity. But perhaps this discussion of abstract concepts would have been better placed in the middle or toward the end when students have already been informed of how the course is relevant to them.

## Reason 2: It's quite disorganized

Having taken three versions of the course, I detected a pattern of simply adding information to the older version and then presenting that as the newest one. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this, in this case it has been done haphazardly.

There were redundant topics that could have been merged and some topics that could have been sequenced better. For instance, an uncaptioned video describing an environmental room scan was added as a separate topic towards the end of the module, but the video's accompanying text is in an entirely different section of the training.

All these, plus the occasional typo, might result in the perception of a lack of credibility on the part of the course creator. This is ironic considering how upholding NAIT's reputation is alluded to as a reason students should practise integrity. As well, these issues cause annoyance on the part of the student which can make them lose interest in finishing the course.



## Practice

It's tough juggling life and school. Your studies are important to you and you work hard, so it is challenging to find time for family and friends. Next week are midterms, after that you can relax! My instructor just asked if I can volunteer at an industry event next Saturday. I have concert tickets for that night, and I was counting on a chance to unwind with friends. What should I do?



Select each item to learn more about the values behind your decision.

Go to the Concert

Volunteer for your instructor

Commit to volunteering weekly

Stop Volunteering after the first event

The first section in the training is about values, like this screenshot of a scenario where students explore the difference in values between going to a concert or volunteering.

This brings me into my final point about NAIT's Academic Integrity Training.

## Reason 3: It's not an actual requirement

This is perhaps the biggest reason why students do not take the course seriously. Though the training is described as a requirement and "it's expected that all students finish this training within the first month of their term," it seems like it is more of a suggestion.

It gets even more absurd when one considers that in order to pass, one must score 100 per cent on the quiz and finish the course within a specified time — both of which are rendered pointless precisely because the course is not required anyway.

To the question of what happens if students do not complete the course, a note by Kathleen Bilodeau of the Academic Integrity Office only says the following: "Completing the Academic Integrity Training Course is part of fulfilling [NAIT's Student Rights and Responsibilities policy] and demonstrates your commitment to student accountability and expectations as a NAIT student."

That's it.

No penalties whatsoever for non-completion. And I know this is true, because I know many people who have simply ignored this course without any consequence to them.

## What can be done?

Unfortunately, I do not believe improving the course content will make a dent in the rampant culture of academic misconduct at NAIT. Even if NAIT administration requires this course and penalizes its non-completion, we will still have people cheating on exams and papers when they see that others can get away with it.

The key lies more in the vigilant enforcement of the penalties for cheating, which is the primary responsibility of the class instructors, who, in my observation, have been inconsistent at best in their approach to this. This is, however, a topic for a separate article where I can also unpack how the training doesn't even talk about AI.



# What makes a club successful?

By Rafael Luis Flores

Every semester, the NAIT Students' Association (NAITSA) provides students opportunities to be involved with school-based communities through accredited campus clubs. Keen observers may notice, however, that while there are highly visible clubs, there are also those that seemingly show up for a few semesters before slowly fading away. This leads to the question, what makes some clubs more successful than others?

According to NAITSA Campus Clubs Manager Rose Martin Baumgartner, the current Campus Clubs Department is the product of nearly two decades of evolving approaches to student club programming at NAIT. In addition to registering clubs, the department provides preliminary funding and ongoing support through regular consultations. In some cases, clubs can even be given additional funding through existing grants.

The most basic way to categorize NAIT campus clubs is by distinguishing between clubs based on academic programs on one hand, and those that are purely interest-based on the other.

Baumgartner observes that program clubs tend to last much longer — decades even. This is partly due to NAIT instructors who act as program club advisors. "They're our greatest asset in the sense of helping students discover clubs," says Baumgartner. "And then we can start grooming them to keep the club running."

As for interest clubs, Baumgartner estimates they last up to seven years long, and even less if the interest type is more nuanced, "like a hacky sack club," says Baumgartner. "I love that they started, but they have to find some folks that want to take that over." It is easy to see why this is the case. Academic programs have a vested interest in supporting the continued existence of their corresponding club — these same clubs help increase attendees or volunteers for their own events. Most interest clubs do not have the same level of continuity support from NAIT faculty.

## A sense of purpose is required

However, Baumgartner believes that regardless of the type of club, certain factors ensure a club's success. "The real difference comes down to the club's leadership and their sense of purpose," she says. "Clubs that have strong organized executive teams and have a clear identity or purpose of what they want to do, whether it's program-based, cultural interest, they tend to thrive." Thriving clubs also tend to take advantage of Campus Clubs resources to hold consistent events, keeping members interested.

This corresponds with the sentiments of Gavin Kuang, President of the Hip Hop Dance Club (HDC) of NAIT. He even uses the term "unhealthy obsession" to describe the HDC leadership's dedication. This approach has certainly reaped rewards for the club. It might be one of the most consistently visible clubs at NAIT, and with a very dynamic membership base. Kuang is well-connected with the dance community and says leaders with a vision put their "heart and soul" into their craft, taking inspiration from Shaolin masters. "And by heart and soul, I mean like, sometimes even skipping studying, sometimes skipping meals, skipping sleep, right? And even I do that sometimes," Kuang said. "That's just all in the spirit of trying to make sure we're doing everything right."



Students network and connect at a Campus Clubs Mixer event

Photo by Dylan Nicholson

Baumgartner references two other interest-based clubs she believes have what it takes for continued success: The Board Game Club and the Book Lovers Club. "Those two are the ones that have shown consistent use of going through their training, using all the resources, the equipment and the grant funding," she explains. According to Baumgartner, this is based on the strength of their leadership. "They're trying to bring more folks into their core group to build that."

## No leadership transition? Your club won't last

Many NAIT programs are only two years long, resulting in a mostly transient student population. This means they might not be interested in investing Shaolin-master-level time and effort to lead a club. When campus clubs do not transition into new leadership, they are not dissolved right away. Instead, they enter a state of dormancy.

This is the current status of the Filipino-themed club Bayanihan at NAIT. John Tejerero, immediate past President of Bayanihan, opened up about this challenge: "I think what we failed to do, or at least what we failed trying to do was to create the succession planning," he says. It is worth noting that Bayanihan under Tejerero's leadership seemed visibly successful. The club had highly-involved members and well-attended events. "But it's just that it's hard to create a succession plan when there's no interested people to step up," Tejerero explains.

## It's all about planning

It appears that there are two main marks of success for clubs. First, how a club's leadership both fulfills — or exceeds — their stated goals. And second, how they are able to develop a segment of their membership to take over the club's reins in the future.

But I'd go a step further and say the former is more important than the latter. In fact, it is even possible that placing pressure on members to take over some day might actually be turning them off. The reality is that NAIT's environment is probably not conducive for the longevity of interest clubs. I consider short-lived clubs that prioritize making a meaningful impact on the lives of their members as more successful than ones that have been around for decades, content with just "existing."



# Heritage Fest returns in November

Editorial by Rafael Luis Flores

Once again, for one day this November, the CAT Crossing will explode with the colours and sounds of the various performances and exhibits of the highly anticipated Heritage Fest. This event is organized and held by the International and Intercultural Community Centre (IICC). Heritage Fest is the opening event of DestiNAITion Global Week that will be held from Nov. 18 to 20, 2025.

What can visitors expect? Last year, I had a “ringside” view as a volunteer for the event. During small breaks in between my duties, I remember admiring the work and creativity that went into each cultural booth, as well as the vibrant costumes of some exhibitors. The most memorable were the upbeat and happy music from the well-represented Nigerian group, the “free Latin hugs” given by the Latin American exhibitors and the impressive one-man show of the Mauritius exhibit.

But what really made an impression on me was the atmosphere of friendship and camaraderie that was shared by all participants and visitors at the event. There was no instance of people of one culture just sticking to their own exhibit. All booths were visited by everybody else, with people taking selfies with their friends and their favourite booths. This is what I am particularly looking forward to when the event returns on Nov. 18.

The Heritage Fest also features a talent showcase where people have the chance to perform song and dance numbers and other cultural presentations. I, unfortunately, was not able to watch this part in its entirety during last year’s event because I had to rush to my class after my volunteer duties. But I will certainly make it a point to watch all performances this year.

Last year, there were 12 cultural booths that held their exhibits, including Punjabi, Nigerian, Mauritian, Indigenous and Latin American.



Students browse a booth at Heritage Fest in 2023

Photo via NAIT

It would be great if there were even more booths and performances this year, and you can make that happen!

If you’re interested in hosting a cultural booth during the Heritage Fest, the IICC will provide the basic craft materials and access to a preparation room for a few days leading up to the event. You will also be required to have a representative attend a mandatory briefing session. Please contact Karen Velasco at [mvelasco@nait.ca](mailto:mvelasco@nait.ca) for expressions of interest and inquiries.

## NAIT alum creates hub for gamers

By Avalina Zenari

Imagine the ideal Dungeons & Dragons game night — you’re having drinks at the local pub, surrounded by friends and laughter as you’re fully immersed in a round of roleplay gaming with an experienced Dungeon Master at the helm, allowing for unlimited fun as you grow in your knowledge of the game.

“What can just be sitting down and making jokes and drinking beers is actually a lot more fulfilling than it may appear at face value,” said Seth Wren, a NAIT Radio and Media Production graduate who turned the gameplay experience into a career.

Wren is the Founder of Game Wizards, an organization established to connect experienced Dungeon Masters and Game Masters with local D&D group game nights for uniquely tailored roleplay. Whether you have a lifetime of experience or are learning the game for the first time, the online hub provides guided services that can help you evolve in the tabletop gaming scene.

“You don’t need to know the rules to start playing,” said Wren to those wanting to become more involved with D&D. “It’s a game that has something for everybody and you just need to find the right group of people to play with.”

The user-friendly web platform allows players to book services, browse local events and connect with management. Users can easily hire available Game Wizards and see what types of gameplay they offer through their profiles.

A huge perk of Wren’s platform is the importance he places on player safety — all listed Game Wizards are thoroughly vetted with background screenings to ensure a worry-free experience for everyone.

Wren hopes the organization will continue to expand, but shared that he is content with the sense of connection he is able to build with players.

“If we can grow to a point where it’s really profitable and that’s all I do, I would love that. If it just stays at a point where I can play the game more, meet new



Seth Wren, centre, runs a game

Photo by Konnor Brown

people and build a community, I would also be happy with that.”

For those interested in becoming involved, the organization frequently teams up with local breweries and pubs to host community roleplay games. Tickets are currently on sale for the upcoming 18+ D&D Halloween Special at Bent Stick Brewing on Oct. 29.

NAIT students can find out more about Game Wizards’ services and view event postings on their website. As for Wren’s words of wisdom for amateur and experienced gamers alike: “If you love doing something and you’re unsure about pursuing it, just try.”



# Two students, two stories: Finding the course load that fits

By Pia Vistro

Starting post-secondary often comes with a big question: how many courses should I take? Some students love staying busy and thrive under a full schedule, while others prefer fewer classes to keep stress manageable.

For many NAIT students, their fast-paced two year programs don't have much flexibility and their courses are chosen for them.

But other programs, like NAIT's Business Administration diploma or degree, work a bit differently; students can pick classes to suit their needs. And if you're new to the program, it's easy to feel lost in the mix of advice and expectations on how many classes to take. It makes one wonder: is there even a right answer?

## A day in the life of two NAIT Marketing students

Faustina Ikokwu, a fourth-year Bachelor of Business Administration Marketing student, is taking a full load of five courses this semester. Her day starts with early trips to campus for a 10 a.m. lecture on Mondays and Wednesdays.

After class, she refreshes her mind with a workout at the NAIT Fitness Centre, then heads home for lunch before her 6-9 p.m. online class. Tuesdays and Thursdays are even busier with two in-person classes, plus another online class in the evening.

On weekends, she switches gears and works as a sales associate, often clocking three to seven hours per shift. Somewhere in between, she balances studying and relaxing in bed.

Milisa Maimon, a second-year Business Administration Marketing student, has taken a different approach.

She's enrolled in three courses, which gives her a lighter week and more flexibility. Her first class also starts at 10 a.m., so she leaves home at 8:30 a.m., studies for about 20 minutes before lectures and takes careful notes in class.

Afterward, she heads home to continue studying, then unwinds with a gym session before making dinner and calling it a night. Mondays are class-free, Tuesday and Thursdays are packed with back-to-back lectures from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Wednesdays and Fridays are lighter with just one class. On weekends, Maimon trades her notebook for a server's apron, picking up shifts at her job.

## Pros and cons of each course load

For Ikokwu, the hardest part of taking five courses is the group work, which she has in every class. Coordinating meetings among busy peers can be overwhelming, especially when multiple assignments have close deadlines. She admitted, "I'm very thankful that right now, in this semester, I don't have any math classes, or I would say that math is my hardest."

Fortunately for Ikokwu, most of her current courses do not require final exams. Plus, the heavier load gives her the chance to catch up after setbacks in her first year.

Initially, she struggled with the course load and even had to retake a class, delaying her graduation. "And because of that, now I'm like, 'Okay, I want to speed that up. I want to push it quicker,'" she said. By maintaining five classes now, she can accelerate her timeline and stay on track for her adjusted graduation year of 2027.

Ikokwu said her schedule is "kind of" manageable in terms of work-life balance. With most commitments packed into Monday through Thursday, she enjoys some free time on Fridays and weekends.

In contrast, Maimon says, "I don't think I have hard days currently."

Still, like Ikokwu, Maimon's biggest challenge is scheduling group work with classmates, since aligning everyone's free time can be tricky, even with less



Photo via NAIT

classes. The best part of her lighter course load is the flexibility: she enjoys going home early on Wednesdays and Fridays and having no school on Mondays.

## It all comes down to priorities

Ikokwu's experience demonstrates that while a full course load can be stressful, it's manageable with strong time-management habits and the willingness to ask for help. Her advice to other students: "I think my best advice is know your limit. That's know where you excel in, know where you struggle a bit with. And if you do struggle in certain aspects, it shouldn't be a problem to ask for help." Burnout, she warns, can take away the joy of learning.

Maimon offers equally valuable advice: "Don't overestimate the amount of time you actually have." She advises students to complete assignments before relaxing, while recalling how cramming left her feeling even more stressed. Her perspective highlights that success isn't just about the number of courses you take, but also about knowing your limits and planning realistically.

Therefore, when deciding on a course load, students should weigh their own priorities:

- Academic goals: Do you want to graduate sooner or pace yourself?
- Work commitments: Do you need time for part-time work?
- Mental health: Can you handle five courses without burning out?

Ultimately, there's no one-size-fits-all path. The takeaways from Ikokwu and Maimon is that you need to be intentional, whether that means pushing ahead to graduate sooner or slowing down to balance work and life. After all, your course load isn't just a number, but a reflection of your goals and priorities. Finding a course load that fits helps you build a meaningful, sustainable student journey to graduation.

**WANT MORE?**  
Read the full article at  
[thenuggetonline.com](https://thenuggetonline.com)





# NAIT grad's monster of a film festival grows again

**By Sara Sheydwasser**

YIKES! Film Festival is gearing up for its third year in Edmonton on Nov. 6, 7 and 8. The festival focuses on horror, sci-fi and experimental films in an atypical, laid-back atmosphere.

Danny Chamberlin, Festival Director and NAIT alum, said YIKES! differs from other regional festivals, adding that organizers wanted to make YIKES! feel like a “giant party.”

“We really wanted to take the whole film festival vibe and sort of flip it on its head,” said Chamberlin. “We pride ourselves on creating a fun atmosphere for attendees.”

YIKES! Fest has seen growing success since its first year in 2023. This year, the festival will run for three days, up from two days in previous years. The extra time has allowed organizers to offer expanded programming and activities to attendees.

“We’ve been super appreciative and a little bit surprised by how fast this thing has grown,” said Chamberlin. “Each year we keep getting bigger and bigger.”

Another difference in this year's festival is its content. YIKES! Fest's first year showcased short films and feature-length films, while its second year focused only on shorts. This year, however, YIKES! Fest will have programming in both categories again, furthering the festival's expansion.

But not everything about the festival has changed; many fan-favourite aspects will be returning. “Another thing that kind of makes us unique is we have live music,” he said. “So we’re not only celebrating independent film, we’re also celebrating independent musicians.”

The festival also features a large vendor hall where attendees can find DVDs, jewellery, clothing and movie memorabilia from over 20 vendors.

“We really do feel like this is sort of like a one-stop shop for all of your favourite things under one roof.”

While the festival has seen significant growth over the past three years, YIKES!



A wall of posters from 2024's YIKES! Fest

Photo via YIKES! Film Festival

has no plans to slow down further expansion. In the future, YIKES! is hoping to create a convention-style event congruent with the film festival.

“We’re not quite there yet,” Chamberlin explained, adding that next year could be the “year of change” for YIKES! Fest.

“The greatest part of the festival is showing up and seeing a room packed full of people who all like the same things that you do,” said Chamberlin. Another highlight of the festival for organizers each year is “meeting new people, enjoying weird and interesting things and, at the end of the day, supporting local artists.”

With Chamberlin being a former NAIT student, the festival has maintained a symbiotic relationship with students and graduates. Chamberlin said there will likely be films made by NAIT grads or students included in the programming.

“The whole Alberta film scene and student film scene is definitely highlighted at this festival.”

YIKES! Film Festival full-weekend, daily and VIP passes are now on sale. NAIT students can use the code NAIT25 at checkout to receive 25 per cent off their tickets.

# Can't connect? Welcome to NAIT

## Editorial by Jasmeen Toor

When you're a student, you try to make your best choices for the future — the right program, the right school and the right investment in yourself. Many of us drain our savings or work part-time jobs just to afford tuition, textbooks, parking, lockers and everything else. We live paycheque to paycheque, but it feels worth it because we expect NAIT, as a polytechnic, to give us the best learning experience possible.

Then imagine this: it's the first week of the semester, you're sitting in the cafeteria, and you overhear students saying, "NAIT's internet sucks." That's a hard pill to swallow when you've just invested thousands in your education. I experienced it myself. In my CMIS class, which revolves around online programs, Wi-Fi issues prevented me from saving my work properly. I ended up redoing the same task two or three times. At one point, a frustrated student just walked out of class, sat down with a coffee in the cafeteria and decided to catch up on his own. We already know bad internet is an inconvenience, but that moment made it clear — it's also a barrier to learning.

At home, Wi-Fi is simple. You get one router, a password and maybe a few devices online. But on campus, it feels like every student has two or three devices connected at once, all fighting for bandwidth. On top of that, the network has to stretch itself across every classroom, lab and study space. I'm not surprised that it lags or disconnects when thousands of us are logged in at the same time.

From my perspective, the system just isn't keeping up with how students actually learn today. We stream lectures, use cloud storage, collaborate on group projects and rely on apps that demand a steady connection. When the

Wi-Fi can't handle it, students are left feeling stuck, stressed and falling behind.

Dropped connections during quizzes, files not uploading to Brightspace and group presentations freezing in the middle of class aren't rare. In fact, they're normal. I've seen classmates hotspot from their phones just to submit assignments on time. Others give up on doing work on campus altogether, choosing to finish things at home instead. It's ironic: NAIT calls itself the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, yet its "technology" sometimes feels like the weakest link.

Some might argue this is just a NAIT problem, but I've heard similar stories from friends at the University of Alberta and MacEwan. At U of A, lecture halls with 500 or more students can bring the Wi-Fi down completely. MacEwan students complain about dead zones and random drops, too. The difference is larger universities often have bigger budgets and more IT staff to handle these issues quickly. NAIT seems to often lag in upgrades and fixes.

As a student, I don't expect perfection. I know campus internet has to handle more traffic than any home network could. But when I can't save my assignments, submit my work on time or even attend an online lecture without glitches, it feels like NAIT isn't living up to its own name and reputation. Students are already carrying enough financial stress, heavy course loads and part-time jobs. Fighting with the Wi-Fi shouldn't be added to that list.

If NAIT truly wants to live up to its own branding and be a leader in technology, it needs to prove it where it matters most: by fixing the basics. Because at the end of the day, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology should be able to fix its own technology.

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

## ZONE 1

A-Wing  
Building B  
Building C  
Building D  
Building N  
O-Wing  
Building T  
U-Wing  
Building V

## ZONE 2

E-Wing  
F-Wing  
G-Wing  
H-Wing  
J-Wing  
S-Wing  
X-Wing

## ZONE 3

Continuing  
Education and  
Industry Training  
Centre (L)  
Centre for  
Information and  
Communications  
Technology(CICT) (W)  
Spartan Centre for  
Instrumentation (Y)

## ZONE 4

Feltham Centre  
(CAT)

## ZONE 5

Satellite Campuses







### ZONE 1

#### Julia McGuire

##### Elect Julia for Zone 1 Student Senate!

I am a first-year Culinary Arts student who loves connecting with people from all backgrounds and programs. At NAIT, we come from different paths, but we all deserve to feel heard, respected, and supported.

I am committed to ensuring that decisions at the governance level reflect the needs of all students—across **Trades, Technology, Communications, and the Arts**.

Be a voice for every student—whether you are in trades, technology, communications, or the arts. I will work to make

sure every program gets the recognition and resources it deserves, and that our student community stays **strong, inclusive, and united**.

If you are looking for someone who listens, understands, and strengthens our student governance, I am ready to serve you.

Let's build a better NAIT together. Vote Julia McGuire for Zone 1!

### ZONE 2

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

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

No Candidates

### ZONE 3

#### Vlad Bondarchuk

##### Vote Vladyslav for NAITSA Senate

My name is Vladyslav Bondarchuk, and I'm running to represent you on the NAITSA Senate.

Through working in different companies and serving as an assistant manager, I've developed strong skills in customer service, teamwork, and communication between management and staff. I also have practical experience with budgeting, analyzing how resources are used, and making fair decisions based on people's needs. These skills directly connect to the responsibilities of a senator, where listening, accountability, and leadership matter most.

The NAITSA Senate is more than just a student role—it is the governing body of a multi-million-dollar not-for-profit organization that approves the annual budget and sets bylaws affecting every student. I want to bring my real-world experience into this environment to make sure NAIT students are supported.

I believe student life at NAIT can always improve, and I want to contribute to that change. If elected, I will work to ensure NAITSA remains transparent, effective, and student-focused.

Vote Vladyslav—for responsible, student-focused governance on the NAITSA Senate. Together, we can make a stronger student experience.

### ZONE 3

#### Jhenson Garcia

Hello. My name is Jhenson Reynel Garcia, but everyone calls me 'Reynel'.

I am one of the many students in the DMIT program here at NAIT.

When you vote for me, you're not just voting for someone. **You're** putting a face behind the voice that **talks to** the Executive Council (EC). A face that you can **know**—that **you** can **believe in**. The face that **you** can **trust** to make sure that the Executive Council helps **you** to **better your campus experience**.

Thanks to **our** efforts last year, **you** have helped me in keeping EC focused on the big picture: **you, our students**.

The W Lounges have new powered tables thanks to **you**. And this year, I plan on helping **us**, the student body of Zone 3, as well as the entirety of the NAITSA student body for another year to come. And **we** can achieve this again, **together**.

**Trust** is the bridge that's difficult to repair but easy to maintain; **the currency that's hard to be indebted in but easy to be repaid**.

And thus, all I ask of **you** is **one thing: Trust in the blue, because the blue trusts you**.

Let's make it happen, **together**.





### ZONE 3 Navjit Kaur

#### Vote NAVJIT KAUR for NAIT Senate 2025

Hello everyone! My name is **Navjit**, and I'm running in the 2025 Senate elections as a **first-year student in Software Development**. Starting my journey at NAIT has shown me the importance of strong student leadership.

What I bring to the Senate are values that guide me every day:

- **Fair Work** – Making decisions that benefit all students equally, without bias.
- **Honesty** – Being transparent and truthful in communication, ensuring trust between students and Senate.

- **Dedication** – Always giving my best effort in every task and responsibility I take on.
- **Approachability** – Listening to concerns with respect and making sure every student feels heard.

If elected, I will use these qualities to help ensure Senate decisions are fair, accountable, and grounded in student priorities.

*Voting takes place **October 10-15, 2025** through the NAIT student portal. Your support means everything, and I would be honoured to serve you as a Senator.*

**Vote Navjit Kaur—your values guiding governance.**



### ZONE 3 Michael Osaigbovo

The NAITSA Senate is critical to the student experience in this pristine institution. Its obligation, **"Governance"** is objectively the most critical in the entire student association structure. The senate ensures accountability and transparency of all activities and decision making within the association.

My name is **Michael Osaigbovo**, and I'm announcing my candidacy for a senate position in **Zone-3(Buildings W, Y & L)**. If elected, I am confident that my experience in Student Union Government and in the corporate sector will aid me to act as fiduciary– in the best interest of every student. I'm passionate about efficient governance and the **collective interests of all NAITSA members** for the greater good and posterity.

My role will be to collaborate with fellow senators to ensure our NAITSA fees are spent efficiently by thorough budget oversight, amend By-laws to reflect student interest and to ensure proper management of NAITSA.

With your support, we will work to create a positive impact on the student experience at NAIT, foster a welcoming community, so every student will have a wonderful story to tell.

**VOTE! MICHAEL OSAIGBOVO. Together we will make an impact.**

Thank You.



### ZONE 4 Sebastian Biel

#### YOU DESERVE A SENATOR THAT PUTS YOU FIRST:

Hi, I'm **Sebastian**, a 3rd-year BBA Finance student. I'm running for NAITSA Senate because **you deserve accountable, transparent governance and representational oversight from someone who genuinely cares about your student experience.**

As **your** Senator, I will hold the Executive Council accountable to ensure that they are acting in your best interest with **integrity, accountability, and fairness. I'll be at the table ensuring real solutions that improve your student life are focused on.**

With a strong background in finance and ethics, I aim to join the Senate Finance Subcommittee, where I can apply the skills that I've gained through my degree to review NAITSA's annual budget. I'll work hard to ensure the student fees you pay are spent responsibly on services, programs, and initiatives that benefit you.

I'm committed to acting with **honesty, accountability, and care**. If you see me on campus, don't hesitate to say hi—I'd love to hear your thoughts or answer any questions.

**My goal is to help create a positive, inclusive, and empowering student experience at NAIT for you. Let's make your student experience better — together.**



### ZONE 4 Michael Dingman

- As a member of the governing body within NAITSA, I plan to uphold all values both as a student and as a Senator. I come from a smaller program within NAIT, and as such, I feel that due to many programs' small headcounts. These students are less likely to participate in a student-elected body, where their skills may prosper in ways they have not yet discovered. It is in my greatest interest to ensure that NAITSA's actions always benefit and support the success of the student body. I hope

to make my experience in the Senate both a learning experience for myself and my peers around campus.

- **Approve** NAITSA expenses and financial commitments
- **Administrative** the passing of new or modified Bylaws that pertain to NAITSA





#### ZONE 4

### Joshua Escandor

Hello my fellow NAIT students!

My name is **Joshua Escandor**, but most people call me Josh. I'm so excited to be running for election to the **NAITSA Senate**! This position is a great opportunity to be involved in decisions such as **bylaw changes** and **budget allocation** that shape how our association is governed.

The Senate's role is to promote **accountability** and **good governance**. As a member of this body, I'll take part in **approving bylaws, overseeing representation, and reviewing and approving NAITSA's annual budget**. These responsibilities are key to ensuring our association remains a **valuable and responsible service** for students.

Building on these responsibilities, my goal as a senator is to approach every decision with **fairness, dedication, and transparency**. Working alongside my fellow senators, I want to ensure the choices we make reflect **NAITSA's values** and help **improve the student experience**.

The Senate needs to reflect the **diversity, creativity, and resilience** of NAIT. By supporting me with your vote, we can work together to **strengthen NAIT's community**!

**Vote Joshua (Josh) Escandor for NAITSA Senate!**



#### ZONE 4

### Garv

Hi! I am Garv, and I am excited to be running again for my second term as a NAITSA Senator.

#### SENATE EXPERIENCE

Last year, you elected me, and it has been an honor for me to serve on Senate. In that role, I reviewed budgets and by-laws, asked questions and held the Executive Council accountable to ensure that decisions were transparent and in the best interests of students.

#### WHY CHOOSE ME AGAIN?

I have proven experience serving a full term on Senate, where I worked to hold the Executive Council accountable and ensure transparency in every decision. As a Business

Administration – Accounting student, I bring the skills to carefully review budgets and bylaws, making certain NAITSA fees are spent responsibly and in ways that directly help students. I am committed to fairness, accountability, and ensuring every student's voice is valued in shaping the NAIT experience.

#### WHY YOUR VOTE MATTERS?

As Senators, our responsibility is not to make promises we cannot deliver, but to ensure NAITSA's Executive Council follows through on theirs. Re-elect me, and I will continue bringing fairness, accountability, and student-focused decision-making to the table.

Vote **Garv** for Senate, and let us make student voices stronger



#### ZONE 4

### Bohdan Kyriienko

Are you a NAIT student hoping to create lasting, positive memories during your academic journey?

Do you find yourself, like me, balancing multiple responsibilities, overcoming challenges, and pursuing both academic and personal goals? If so, this message is for you.

Hello, I'm Bohdan Kyriienko. I'm a Bachelor of Business Administration student specializing in Finance, and I am dedicated to enhancing NAIT's environment while respecting its long-standing traditions.

Will you join me? Since I enrolled at NAIT last year, I've been eager to get involved in student affairs. I see the advantages

that emerge when every student's voice is heard, when we advocate for our shared interests, and when we put our efforts toward meaningful goals. This drive inspired me to run for the Senator position. Why am I qualified? I am dependable, dedicated, and truly understand the concerns of students. My aims are to ensure compliance with Bylaws, secure approval of annual operational and capital budgets, and address governance issues beyond the Executive Council's authority.



#### ZONE 4

### Gursimran Mangat

Hi, I'm Gursimran (or Simran) Mangat, and I'm thrilled to announce my candidacy for the NAITSA 2025/26 Student Senate. My goal is to focus on governance that will enhance student life for everyone at NAIT.

I'm currently in my 3rd year of the BBA – Accounting program, and like many students, when I first started, I didn't know what the Senate did. It turns out they play an important role in approving bylaws, reviewing and approving the annual budget, and ensuring the Executive Council is held accountable when needed. I believe that my time at NAIT has equipped me with the skills and knowledge necessary to take on this role and do my best

for all of us. Over the past year, I've become more involved with extracurricular activities and have represented NAIT at case competitions. Participating in these experiences has truly enhanced my time here and shown me how positive changes can make a direct impact on our experiences.

If you see me around campus, feel free to say hello. I'd love to chat and hear your thoughts.

I'm grateful for your support and encourage you to vote for me in this election. **Vote for Gursimran!**





## ZONE 4 Raghav Sachdeva

Hi, my name is Raghav Sachdeva, and I'm in the Business – Entrepreneurship and Innovation program. I'm running for the NAITSA Senate because I want to ensure decisions are responsible, transparent, and accountable.

If elected, I will focus on reviewing budgets carefully, ensuring bylaws and policies are clear and followed, and holding the Executive Council accountable for the actions they take. I will ask questions, monitor processes, and make

sure decisions are implemented properly. I am committed to supporting good governance, maintaining organized procedures, and strengthening the student experience at NAIT. My goal is a Senate that is accountable, efficient, and effective, and I will bring focus, dedication, and diligence to every responsibility I take on.



## ZONE 4 Steve Vy

Hi everyone! Here's what we need to do:

### Vote!

Still reading? Bet! Here's a bit about myself. I am in my 4th year in the Bachelor Business Administration program, and my personal goal is to elevate the NAIT experience. I am an awesome and driven student who has been involved in many extracurricular activities, including:

- Volunteering
- VP and president of clubs
- Peer mentorship

Still unsure? I got a favour to ask you that would benefit the entire NAIT student community:

### Vote!



## ZONE 4 Ashendra Wijesinghe

My name is Ashendra Wijesinghe- though you can call me Ash. I'm a first year construction engineering student & a candidate for the 2025/2026 NAITSA Senate for zone four. Outside academics I am a car guy and a photographer. If you see me in the CAT building, come say hi!

The senate plays a vital role in overseeing the executive council, ensuring their decisions reflect the best interests of YOU.

If elected, I will dedicate myself to,

- I. **Enhancing the student experience** through improved events, meet & greets, clubs & student support.
- II. **Ensuring the executive council meets the needs of student body** so YOUR time at NAIT is unique.

III. **Prioritizing students' best interests** at bylaw changes and governing decisions

IV. **Managing the annual budget responsibly**, so YOUR money is not wasted

With over **150 hours of volunteer experience** in various organizations, I understand the importance of service, teamwork and accountability. I am approachable, adaptable, trustworthy and never hesitate to speak out against injustice or unfairness.

"I strongly believe the senate must ensure the executive council's decisions truly represent, empower, and support every student." Vote for **Ashendra Wijesinghe** and, I will work hard to make that vision, a reality.



## ZONE 4 Harry Woo

Vote **HARRY WOO** for **Senate Election**

Hello, I am excited to share that I will be running for **Senate Election**. I want to

challenge myself by becoming part of this program because I believe that a good candidate begins with the willingness to **listen, learn** and make **thoughtful decisions**. If given the opportunity to serve as a **governor**, I hope to take responsibility, work hard and do my best to make a positive impact to our school community.

As a **CANDIDATE**, my goals are clear and simple: I will approach decisions thoughtfully and contribute responsibly

to school projects. I am determined to give my best and try to handle every commitment with care and dedication.

I may not be a governor yet, but I am committed to **learning, listening** and **working** with you to create positive results. Together, we can support a community where the spirit of **ooks's** thrives, connected and inspired.

On **voting day**, I would be grateful for your support.

Vote **HARRY WOO** for **Senate Election**

**Your vote, your choices, your future.**





#### ZONE 5

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

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

No Candidates

# Celebrate With Us

**Wednesday, October 15 | 4:30PM | NAITSA Office (0108)**

Join us for refreshments & cookies and the announcement of  
unofficial election results!



GROW YOUR CAREER. JOIN STUDENT GOVERNMENT.



# NAITSA SENATE ELECTION 2025/2026

## VOTING INFORMATION BOOTHS

- Main Campus  
NAITSA Office O108
- Main Campus  
near Fresh Express
- Main Campus X-wing  
near the bookstore
- South Lobby
- HP Centre 1st floor  
near Bytes
- CAT 1<sup>st</sup> floor  
near the Crossing
- CAT 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
near the student lounge

## ONLINE VOTING USING YOUR NAIT STUDENT PORTAL OCTOBER 10-15 AT 4PM

For more information, visit  
[naitsa.ca/elections](https://naitsa.ca/elections)



## VOTER PRIVACY & ELECTION VOTING INTERFERENCE

Did you know that NAITSA's Bylaw 7.17 protects a voters' right to cast their vote privately during all elections and referendum? While campaigning all candidates need to leave the immediate area of a student at large who opens a device to log-in and vote in this election.

If you feel your rights as a voter have been violated in this election visit:  
[naitsa.ca/naitsa-elections](https://naitsa.ca/naitsa-elections)

**naitsa**



# Ooks golf team snags silver, two bronze and qualifies six for nationals

By Geono Aloisio

The Ooks golf team finished their conference season in September at the 2025 Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) Golf Championships, and both the men's and women's teams won medals.

The men's team won silver for the second consecutive year after finishing the tournament with a team score of +41. Mason Gorski led the team with an overall score of +1 and finished third in the conference to earn himself an individual bronze medal. Cayden Clark finished second on the team and fifth in the conference with +2, followed by Donovan Caldwell's score of +15, Nate Kasowski's score of +23 and Brophy Dunne's score of +31.

Gorski was also named to the ACAC Men's All-Conference team for his play this season. The third-year golfer finished third in Regional #1 earlier in September and helped the men's team earn their only first-place tournament finish since the program's revival.

The women's team finished in third place, earning a bronze medal. Ava Radke finished ninth out of 18 golfers.

The Ooks' Lexi Gedny finished second on the team with +77, Jada Lee finished third with +79 and Jocelyn Avis finished fourth with +80.

The teams' Head Coach, Tyler Leicht, described the championships as "very impressive" for NAIT and expressed he is "very proud" of his team's performance this season.

"Our goal every year is to try and qualify for nationals, to take our men's team and take a couple ladies," Leicht said in an interview with *the Nugget*. "We're very happy, very fortunate and really proud of the team for what we've been able to accomplish."

Leicht, in his third year leading the program, was also named the 2025 ACAC Golf Coach of the Year.

"My perspective on those things is that it's a reflection of the team and the staff and the people that are around me," Leicht shared. "I don't really see it as an individual award, I kind of see it as a team award and just kind of the culture



Golfers get ready for the tournament in 2024.

Photo via ACAC

we've built."

The men's team, along with Radke, will now head to the national championships in October.

At nationals last year in Toronto, the Ooks men's team finished ninth out of 10 teams for the second consecutive year, and the women's team finished fourth, just missing the podium. This time around, Leicht has high hopes that the Ooks can improve on last year's performance.

"It's a golf course we went to in our first year [at nationals] in 2023 ... but yeah, we're excited. We're looking forward to it," he explained. "We haven't finished within the top five on the men's side. So we're hoping to improve on our last two years and then see where it can take us."

The 2025 nationals are hosted in Medicine Hat and will take place from Oct. 13 to Oct. 17.





# What is the Fairness and Safety in Sport Act, and how does it affect NAIT?



Photo via NAIT Ooks

By Geono Aloisio

NAIT has created a new policy to establish eligibility for their female athletes based on a controversial new bill from the Government of Alberta. The government's Fairness and Safety in Sport Act (Bill 29) mandates organizations to "establish, implement and maintain policies respecting fairness and safety with respect to each relevant sport" by Sept. 1, 2025. NAIT, like other publicly-funded post-secondary institutions and provincial or federal sports organizations, was required to create policies to verify their athletes over the age of 12 and playing in female-only leagues are biologically female.

The Alberta government's website says the new bill aims to establish "a balanced approach to protect the integrity of female athletic competitions by ensuring women and girls have the opportunity to compete in biological female-only divisions, while also ensuring transgender athletes are able to meaningfully participate in the sports of their choice."

HS 7.0, NAIT's Fairness and Safety in Sport Policy, says that in order to play in female-only leagues the athlete "must be of the female sex at birth." Documentation must be submitted to prove their eligibility, and athletes, team managers or parents of athletes under 18 can challenge the validity of an athlete's eligibility.

Athletes are still allowed to play during the process of verifying a challenge, but if they are found ineligible, they will no longer be allowed to play in female-only leagues at NAIT permanently. If they are eligible, no further challenges will be accepted.

The Act and NAIT's policy does not apply to male athletes.

NAIT reiterated their commitment to allowing NAIT students to be themselves in a statement provided to *the Nugget*.

"We remain deeply committed to fostering an environment where all people feel safe, valued and included," said Clayton Davis, Vice-President HR, Students and International. But as a public post-secondary institution, "NAIT is subject to the regulations under the Act," and was required to have a policy in place by Sept. 1.

Davis "recognize[s] that this policy may raise concerns and questions among students, staff, and athletes," and encouraged anyone who requires support to visit the Centre for Community and Belonging or use NAIT's Employee Assistance Program for staff.

James Wiebe, a NAIT business student and President of the NAIT chapter of the Trans Equality Society of Alberta, believes the new regulation will have negative effects on transgender youth across the province.

"It's going to make them feel like they're second-class citizens," Wiebe said in an interview with *the Nugget*. "There's a lot of closeted trans people here [in Alberta] that you'll never know because they're so scared."

"There is a real life impact," Wiebe said. "They are our brothers, our sisters, our friends, they're our parents, they're our kids ... and if we want to be good human beings, we will support their mental health."

The new bill Bill 29 will not apply to intramurals and co-ed sports leagues. However, the bill's overview included that it opens the door for "the expansion and creation of mixed-sex leagues, classes or divisions, where numbers warrant."



# School spirit: Lived, not manufactured

Editorial by Jasmeen Toor

Last semester, I passed a student in an Oaks shirt and shorts and instantly pictured her as a basketball player. That image stayed with me. Months later, when new TV screens were installed in near the Athletics office, I was rushing to class and caught a glimpse of one. It showed me the same kind of Oaks spirit I had imagined — a sense of pride and identity that stuck in my mind. That is the power of branding.

Gilles Prefontaine, a Marketing Instructor at NAIT, believes branding is more than a logo on a wall or a slogan on a poster. “Students are coming to a school to not only get an education, but it is all about their experience over that time of getting that education,” he said. And students have certain expectations. “When we look at different schools, they brand themselves. They put out that storytelling element of what students can expect when faced with coming to NAIT or any other kind of post-secondary institution.”

It is how we as students connect with NAIT every day. Whether it’s someone wearing Oaks gear, a highlight reel playing in the hallway, or a banner by the gym, branding can create moments that remind us we belong here.

To me, school spirit is that pride of belonging.

*It’s not only about cheering in the stands but also about walking onto campus and feeling proud of the choice we made to come here.*

According to Prefontaine, branding at long-standing institutions like NAIT builds up over time. For NAIT, it’s been building for over 60 years.

But branding also shows up in small ways — joining a club, supporting a team, even just wearing the school’s colours. “When I look at NAIT’s overall branding, it’s about bringing together all of these different groups,” said Prefontaine. Spirit is not forced. It builds naturally when we feel like we’re part of something bigger.

That’s where branding plays a powerful role. It shapes identity. It tells us what kind of community NAIT is. Seeing NAIT blue or the snowy white Ookpik is a symbol of connection. “People will look and point it out,” said Prefontaine. “It brings down barriers.” It tells us we’re part of a story, and it brings out a pride that lasts beyond graduation.

“And so that is that wonderful piece of that pride in the NAIT brand, and also that element that it takes all of us. It takes industry, it takes instructors, it takes administrators, it takes students all to bring that really vibrant community together,” said Prefontaine.

Prefontaine brought up all the different activities centres available to NAIT



Top: Photo via NAIT; Bottom: Photo by Ana Kostyrko @ana.with.a\_camera\_

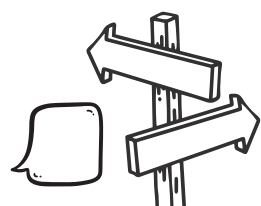
students. There are student clubs, Oaks athletics, the Nîsôhkamâtôtân Centre, the International and Intercultural Community Centre and countless other supports for students — all with their own unique branding. Students being part of a greater community, he explained, creates “all the little ingredients, all the foundation for them to be successful in the future.”

What stayed with me most, though, was this advice Prefontaine had for students: “Be the hero of your own NAIT brand story.”

That line captures what I have seen and felt. Because when I think back to that student in an Oaks shirt, or those new screens flashing highlights in the hallway, it’s clear that school spirit is not manufactured. It’s lived — student by student, moment by moment.

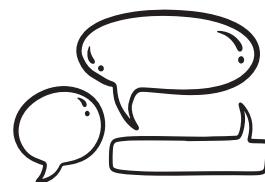
Branding gives us the symbols and the stage. Spirit is what we choose to make of it.





# CLUBS CORNER

*Hip Hop Dance Club hosts first-ever showcase*



The performance team, called S112 for the room they practice in, at the showcase.

Photo supplied by Gavin Kuang

By Rafael Luis Flores

This past summer, the Hip Hop Dance Club (HDC) at NAIT held its first-ever dance showcase at the Old Strathcona Performing Arts Centre. Promoted as the “HDC Showcase,” the sold-out event was attended not only by the club’s members and supporters, but also by different dance groups and enthusiasts in Edmonton. In a LinkedIn post, former club President Allyson Hamor shared that audiences described the event as “one of the smoothest, most entertaining events seen from a post-secondary dance club this year.”

HDC considers this June 7 event to be its most significant external achievement since its founding in 2017. This was the first time the club took the lead in organizing an event of such magnitude, where 18 groups and individuals made up the roster of performers. Usually, it is HDC’s various members under its performance team — named “S112” after the NAIT classroom HDC uses — that participate in other dance showcases.

Despite the success, current club President Gavin Kuang said the event was not intended to be a regular or annual occurrence. According to him, there are three major dance events held in Edmonton each year. One of the three annual events, United Dance Edmonton’s summer showcase, was canceled so the United dancers could prepare for a competition. This gave the HDC an opening to organize their own showcase.

Kuang said United made the announcement in 2024. “So just knowing that there was going to be an empty space with no events in the summer, which is when United happens, we thought if anyone should step up, it should be HDC.”

The event was also meant to be a special send-off for Hamor, who was concluding her two and a half-year term as President of the HDC. She had been

at the helm of the club since it was reorganized in 2022, when NAIT clubs were allowed to resume operations after COVID-19 restrictions were eased.

“So we wanted to do the showcase for her, but also for the other dancers in Edmonton,” Kuang said.

Now, Kuang is getting used to his role as HDC’s new President while recruiting NAIT students for the club’s expansion. Since the club’s performance directors are soon retiring, the club also needs to fill this crucial role. In the meantime, HDC’s popular weekly drop-in classes and their performance teams “will continue to stay active.”

But Kuang is in his third year at NAIT, and is considering what will happen once he retires as HDC’s President. Kuang views his role as one who works to ensure the continuity and relevance of the club for future NAIT students. “My goal right now is to hopefully offer HDC into the hands of NAIT students,” he said. “Every year and every semester, the structure changes. People come and go, and we have to adapt either our team or our content to fit what we can or cannot do.”

He says he wants the current HDC leadership to be ready “to pass on [the club] to the next generation of dancers, of passionate students that want to do events, that want to perform for people, for NAIT, for other groups and other events in Edmonton.”

“We want our performers to be able to represent HDC in the best way that they can through the performances,” said Kuang.

Students can find out more about the Hip Hop Dance Club at NAIT by visiting Ooks Life or following @hdcnait on Instagram.



# Sustainability spotlight

## Cherry Pick Collective



Farrar shows off some of her favourite thrift finds.  
Photos supplied

*Sustainability Spotlight is a collaboration between the Nugget and NAITSA's Sustainability Committee. Each month, the committee interviews a sustainability expert to learn more about their journey. This month features Sara Farrar, NAITSA's Campus Clubs Finance Supervisor, secondhand clothing and fashion enthusiast, and co-owner of Cherry Pick Collective.*

*Answers have been edited for clarity and space.*

**NAITSA Sustainability Committee: What first sparked your passion for sustainability?**

**Sara Farrar:** I think it was knowing that change could be made in my hands and I didn't have to rely on other people or something outside of what was in my control. I really liked being able to see an impact through little things that I was doing and it just helped motivate me to hopefully do bigger things.

**NSC: How has your understanding of sustainability evolved over time?**

**SF:** The biggest way it evolved was knowing that the small things also matter. Although big changes in sustainability are the ideal place that I want to see the world, the small things are what lead up to that.

Knowing those little changes that you can make in your life that maybe aren't really crazy, like separating your recycling, or doing one load of laundry rather than two or in cold water. The smaller things really help make that difference, and it empowers you to feel like you can do more and more of those small things.

**NSC: Can you tell us about a project or initiative that you're most proud of?**

**SF:** The project I'm most proud of is Cherry Pick Collective. It's a small reselling and secondhand clothing brand that me and my four girlfriends

started. We've been thrifting and going to Value Village since we were in grade eight, and we've always just loved clothes. I love the story behind clothes and that project really brought a community of people together that love the clothes just as much as we do.

It was just something that I could be as creative as I wanted to be, try out new clothes that I wanted to try and be able to see things in different perspectives.

It was just so amazing to be able to connect with people and help them find something that made them shine, that made them really confident and just having those conversations with people and having fashion be the bridge for that, it was amazing.

**NSC: How do you stay motivated in the face of slow progress or setbacks?**

**SF:** Not everything is going to go to plan. Even as a planner myself, it just doesn't. And you have to embrace those changes that come and remind yourself of what it is that you can do in those situations.

Sometimes we all have things going on that maybe set us back, or knowing that the sustainable future that we want to see might be a little bit further into the future than we had hoped it would be, but knowing that it takes that commitment or that appreciation for what that future could look like and still working towards it regardless of the setbacks that might come.

**NSC: Are there any books, films or people who have inspired your journey?**

**SF:** I love seeing how people dress up and the stories that I can make. I love seeing how people style certain things and just seeing how people wear real clothes. Although what we see online is still true, I love in person interactions. I love just seeing people living and how they want to go about their day.

**NSC: What sustainable habits or practices would you recommend for beginners?**

**SF:** So a lot of the clothes now are made of polyester, which is just another kind of form of plastic. Washing those clothes in cold water is ideal because the hot water actually makes them shrink. So washing it in cold water and air drying — not only for the polyester aspect but also avoiding using the dryer, extra electricity, things like that.

Hang them up when we have nice weather! I hang stuff off of my balcony and clip them to whatever I can find.

Also, mending items, especially from the thrift store. A lot of those items are old and they might not be in the most perfect condition, but if you take 10 minutes to google how to sew on a button or how to repair a seam that split, you'll find that they're really easily fixable.

I went thrifting with my mom last summer and found this amazing floral dress, and I didn't notice at the time but when I got home, I saw that there was a rip in one of the seams. So I went to Dollarama, got sewing supplies, and decided I was going to fix it. It looks a little weird, but I'm proud when I wear it, because I fixed it.

To learn more about Cherry Pick Collective, visit the Instagram page @cherrypickcollective. Catch up on other Sustainability Spotlight interviews at <https://www.ookslife.ca/organization/naitsasustainabilitycommittee>





Winner of the plank contest, hosted by Athletics and Recreation.

Photo by Noura Eltinay



Dancers and drummers performed in CAT for NAIT’s Treaty Days celebration.

Photo by Mathieu Durnford



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HARD

THE ANSWERS YOU NEED ON THE NUGGET ONLINE.

(if what you need is answers to sudooku)



Comic by Chinny Feb Taleon @ch1n\_o2



Photos by Ana Kostyrko @ana.with.a\_camera\_



# MAIN CAMPUS OFFICES AND SERVICES



- SYMBOLS**
- Student Service Centre
  - Parking
  - Motorcycle Parking
  - Bike Lockers
  - ETS Station
  - Bus Stop
  - Pick-up/Drop-off
  - DATS Location
  - Bike Tune-up Station
  - Emergency Meeting Point
  - AED  
See Main Campus AED and Muster Point Map for detailed locations

## LOCATIONS

EDMONTON  
Main Campus  
11762 - 106 Street nw  
Patricia Campus  
12204 - 149 Street nw  
Souch Campus  
7110 Gateway Boulevard nw

## BUILDINGS

- |            |  |            |  |
|------------|--|------------|--|
| <b>A</b>   | Industrial Building  | <b>L</b>   | Continuing Education and Industry Training Centre    |
| <b>B</b>   | Centre for Manufacturing Solutions                                       | <b>N</b>   | Sandvik Coromant Centre for Machinist Technology     |
| <b>C</b>   | Gateway Mechanical Services Centre for Building Environmental Technology | <b>O</b>   | Central Building                                     |
| <b>CAT</b> | Feltham Centre   | <b>PIC</b> | Productivity and Innovation Centre                   |
| <b>D</b>   | Alternative Energy Centre  | <b>S</b>   | Activities Centre                                    |
| <b>E</b>   | Technical Building   | <b>T</b>   | Administration Building                              |
| <b>F</b>   | Medical Wing   | <b>U</b>   | Learning Resources Centre                            |
| <b>G</b>   | Centre for Chemical Studies  | <b>V</b>   | Industrial Technical Building                        |
| <b>H</b>   | Electronics Wing   | <b>W</b>   | Centre for Information and Communications Technology |
| <b>HET</b> | Distribution Centre  | <b>X</b>   | South Learning Centre                                |
| <b>J</b>   | Centre for Electrical Technology   | <b>Y</b>   | Spartan Centre for Instrumentation Technology        |

## OFFICES AND SERVICES

Arena	S-221	NAITrium	J-104	Student Service Centre	CAT-180
Athletics	E-131	NAITSA (NAIT Students' Association)	O-108	Admissions and Enrolment Support	
Centre for Community and Belonging	E-134	Nest Eatery	S-110	Advising and Career Development Services	
Corporate & Continuing Education Welcome Centre	L-159	Nîsohkamâtotan Centre	E-121	Funding and Financial Aid Services	
Ernest's	U-121	OneCard	CAT-180N	Pre-Admission Immigration Advising	
Fitness Weight Centre	S-006	Parking Services	CAT-180N	Student Awards	
Gymnasium	E-140	Protective Services	D-104	Student Study Lounges	U-210
Health Services	S-105	Reflection Rooms	CAT-406		CAT-200
International and Intercultural Community Centre	W-101	Shop AT NAIT	J-209	Study Commons, CAT	CAT-215
Learning Services	E-105	Student Artisanal Market	L-024	Study Commons, NAITSA	W-203
Library Services	U-310	Student Counselling	O-120		
			W-111PB		