



ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

**FINANCIAL AUDIT**  
*of the*  
**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION**  
*for the year ending*

**December 31, 2011**

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ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## President's Report

I have had the pleasure of serving as the President of the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association (AUGSA) for another term. It has been wonderful to see the continued growth of our organization! In the past year we have expanded our student services and increased our advocacy at both the provincial and federal levels.

Before I go further into my report, I would like to take this as an opportunity to thank the AUGSA Executive Committee and Council for trusting me to lead our organization for another year. You have been a great team to work with and I thank you all for the outstanding engagement and hard work that you have given to the graduate students of Athabasca University. I would also like to thank all of the graduate students in the AU community who supported the AUGSA through volunteering on various committees, or simply by providing valuable feedback on our operations and services.

### AUGSA Services

We have continued to increase our student services this year, providing students with more awards and hosting a greater number of Meet and Greet events, among other things. This year, AUGSA offered the following student services to its membership:

- Meet and Greet events in Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Halifax, and Ottawa;
- Awards to encourage and recognize AU staff and faculty who go above and beyond the call of duty in order to ensure that the graduate experience at AU is exceptional;
- Awards to AU graduate students for their work in developing a robust AU graduate student community;
- Assistance to individual students in navigating university processes and procedures;
- An e-newsletter to ensure students were aware of important information, events, and deadlines;
- Online orientation sessions for new and returning students; and
- Co-hosting graduate student conferences with the Alberta Graduate Council as well as with AU.

For much of the past year, we have also worked to investigate an AUGSA Health and Dental Plan for our members at their request. This was a hotly debated issue, with strong opinions both for and against. Ultimately, the student body opted against implementing a health and dental plan during a referendum held this spring.

### AUGSA Advocacy

2011 was a big year for AUGSA advocacy and government-relations work. We have continued our work with our partners in provincial and federal lobbying groups: the Alberta Graduate Council (AGC) and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA).

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At the provincial level, we have seen success in having several of our lobby requests implemented by the government, including:

- Relaxed eligibility requirements around provincial part-time bursaries;
- Support for graduate student professional development through a significant grant from the Alberta Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology to support our upcoming graduate student conference; and
- Increased post-secondary funding and a government commitment to sustainable future funding.

These successes haven't made us complacent. This year, I served as the Government Relations Officer for the Alberta Graduate Council. We continue to work with the AGC and the provincial government in order to improve the graduate student experience for all AU graduate students.

Our priorities in the upcoming year will be to have two seats for graduate students on university Boards of Governors, the creation of a provincial part-time student loan program, a more integrated Campus Alberta library system to better support graduate-level research, and for more provincially funded professional development opportunities for graduate students.

At the federal level, I was elected as the Chair of the CASA Graduate Council, which has given AUGSA a powerful voice for graduate-level education in Canada. The CASA Graduate Council has a number of lobby points that AUGSA is in strong support of, including:

- Developing a policy to support open access to journals and other academic publications through the federal granting agencies;
- Fair copyright legislation that supports post-secondary education and research; and
- Updating the Canada Student Loan Program to ensure all students are able to receive the aid they need to be successful in their academic programs.

While graduate students have sometimes been underrepresented at CASA, I believe that AUGSA's strong leadership within the Graduate Council has allowed the graduate student voice to be better heard both internally within CASA and among Members of Parliament and the Senate. Because AU graduate students come from all across Canada (not to mention the world), I believe that it is important for AUGSA to have a strong voice at the federal level and so I look forward to AUGSA's continued involvement in the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. In addition to our provincial and federal lobbying, we are heavily involved in the governance and political processes at the university level. I sit on the Athabasca University Board of Governors and our VP Academic, Rob Janzen, represented graduate students on the General Faculties Council during the 2011/2012 academic year. Through the Board of Governors, I have also sat on the Finance and Property, Institutional Advancement, and Academic Affairs Committees. Now that Athabasca University has transitioned to a new governance model, I look forward to ensuring graduate students are also well-represented on the various Faculty and Centre Councils. Just as I did last year, I attended AU Convocation in June of 2011 and will do so again in 2012, along with our Operations Coordinator.

In addition to these efforts, our executive team has made a point of keeping open communication channels between the AUGSA and the university. We regularly meet with the Dean of Graduate Studies and the AU Vice President, Academic in order to keep them apprised of the concerns and needs of graduate students.

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**Concluding Comments**

As I reflect upon the past year, I am very proud of what the AUGSA has accomplished. 2010 was a year spent developing the processes of the association, while also beginning our work as a strong source for advocacy and student services. With our organizational processes well established by the start of 2011, we were able to focus our energies on increasing the services that we provide and doing more effective advocacy work on behalf of AU graduate students. I believe that we have accomplished both of those goals and will only do better in the future.

As I will be President of the AUGSA again next year, I look forward to continuing to grow the AUGSA into an even stronger organization that provides students without outstanding services and a strong voice in the university, the province, and the country.

To the outgoing members of the AUGSA Council and Executive, thank you for your hard work. It has been wonderful to work with you all over the past year. I look forward to continuing to work with those of you who have been re-elected, as well as with the new faces who will be joining us in the coming months.

To the members of the AUGSA, thank you again for the tremendous opportunity that you have afforded me over the last year to serve as your President. You never cease to inspire me with your hard work, dedication, and outstanding commitment to furthering yourself through a graduate level education at Athabasca University. It has been a pleasure, yet again. Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Nielsen, B.A.  
President, AUGSA  
Master of Arts – Integrated Studies Student

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## Vice President Operations and Finance's Report

My name is Nathaniel Ostashewski, and I have been the Vice President Operations and Finance (VPOF) for the 2011/2012 term. As a two-term member of the council, I am pleased to say that the financial processes established during the 2009 and 2010 have now been solidified within the management structure of AUGSA. This means that the budgeting and financial decisions of AUGSA are working well to represent the roles and responsibilities that AUGSA carries out on behalf of Athabasca Graduate students.

During the 2011/12 term, as VPOF, I have been involved in the following:

1. Revision and monthly management of the council performance review: A process that aims to ensure that council members' monthly pay is tied to their performance. Attendance at meetings, contribution and communications, and past monthly performance are areas of the performance rubric and report that allow council to appraise monthly performance. This allows for a fair and responsible pay structure for members of the AUGSA council and ensures that money being spent is producing tangible results on the behalf of AU graduate students.
2. Audit processes: A yearly audit of the AUGSA financials is required by the AU Board of Governors, and this process was first initiated in January 2011. As a result the 2009 and 2010 AUGSA audits were completed and [can be found on the AUGSA website](#). A significant component of this process is budgeting and reporting of the yearly expenditures at any point in time to the council. With the implementation of an accountant and auditor reviewed process, AUGSA has been able to get monthly snapshots of expenses and budget lines, which greatly helps council maintain the budget and keep on track with the yearly expenses.
3. VPOF transition package: Payroll, monthly reporting, and bank account management is key in this role and is critical in making sure that AUGSA can conduct daily business.
4. Social media engagement: The setup and use of the AU Landing and AUGSA YouTube accounts—complete with AU executive council video introductions—is one place where social media has been used to connect to students. I was involved in the production and support of these, and I hope that they will continue with the incoming executive.

I sincerely hope that AUGSA is able to continue to meet the needs of graduate students, and I have worked to ensure that the financial position of AUGSA can continue to be transparent, responsive, and meet the needs of Graduate students. As this is my final term as an AU graduate student, I would like to thank all those AUGSA members who I have worked with over the past two years and wish luck to the future councils. AUGSA is an organization that students can be proud of; thank you for the opportunity to be part of the building of this organization.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel Ostashewski  
 VP Operations & Finance, 2011/12  
 Doctor of Distance Education Candidate

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## Vice President External's Report

Serving as the AUGSA Vice President External led to many accomplishments within the organization, as well as personal growth. My name is Greta Kirstein, and I am currently enrolled in the Heritage Resources Management Post-Baccalaureate Diploma, which is near completion.

The duties and responsibilities of the VP External are focused on the relationships with external groups. However, equally important are the duties of completing various teamwork-oriented tasks with the rest of the executive and council. One of the largest tasks that fell under my portfolio was participation in our federal advocacy group activities, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). Participation involved four conferences: Regional Transition, Policy and Strategy Conference, Lobby Conference, and the Annual General Meeting. There was also involvement in the following committees: National Advocacy, Member Relations, and Graduate Council. With our AUGSA President, we had representation on all committees.

Policy development was a focus this year. Being a young organization and serving mainly at a distance, we needed to start developing well-researched policies to be used at the meetings with decision makers as well as have these documents accessible online. We need to have the data/research in the future to ask AU, the government and granting agencies for changes that our students need in order to strive towards a quality, affordable and innovative educational experience. My hope is that this will continue in the next term, with the result being a Policy section on our website.

As part of the executive and council, some of our accomplishments as a team were:

- A survey to find out about the student services and advocacy priorities that our students value/want;
- Involvement in the AUGSA Newsletter committee, writing and editing articles;
- The Governance Review Committee, who updated our bylaws this term;
- At the beginning of my term, I organized the purchasing of AUGSA swag gifts ; and
- Continuous participation when meeting with students and AU staff throughout the year.

A challenge in this portfolio has been fulfilling the role at a distance from Toronto. This was only accomplished through sharing responsibilities. Of particular note is the fact that our Vice President Operations and Finance, participated in the Alberta Graduate Council on my behalf. This year, we continued to spread the word of who AUGSA is and what services we provide to AU graduate students. We have seen positive results in our increased participation at events, through social media engagement with students and increased readers of our newsletter. Through these results, we saw increased awareness of the AUGSA in 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Greta Kirstein, B.A.

VP External, 2011

Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Heritage Resources Management Student

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## Vice President Academic's Report – 2011

Hi, I'm Rob Janzen, and I have had the privilege of being your Vice President Academic for this past year. I am in the MSCIS program, and am working on my final project.

The Vice President Academic position at AUGSA is primarily responsible for communication and interactions both with the students and on behalf of the students of Athabasca University. And of course, being a relatively small group, the members of the Executive Committee all work together on larger projects as well.

In the past year I have worked hard to advocate for students, bringing their issues forward to AU and working to resolve them. As well, I worked hard to build relationships within AU to help resolve student issues as quickly as possible.

Some of the accomplishments that from this year are:

- **Strategic Plan:** As a group, we developed a strategic plan for AUGSA to help ensure that we were focussing our efforts into the areas we felt were appropriate for us as an organization.
- **Teaching / Research Assistants:** We have entered into talks with Athabasca University to negotiate a collective agreement for these positions. This would establish a framework that would allow graduate students to be hired for these types of positions.
- **Co-curricular transcripts:** We have had students request that we investigate the possibility of establishing co-curricular transcripting at Athabasca University. Based on that, we have started talking with the University about this topic. We have also begun researching policy and surveying students regarding this matter.

As well, I have worked with the AUGSA Newsletter Committee to help suggest and publish articles for the newsletter.

One of the other important roles of this position is sitting on numerous committees with Athabasca University to both find out what is happening with the University as well as ensuring that the voice of graduate students are heard on these committees. These committees range from the General Faculty Council Executive to the Student Academic Appeal Committee to the Ad-hoc Anti-Plagiarism Committee.

It has been a pleasure working with AUGSA this year, and I wish the incoming candidate, Ms. Olivia Meyia, great success in the next year.

Rob Janzen  
VP Academic, 2011  
Master of Science in Information Systems Student

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## Operations Coordinator's Report

The past year has been another highly successful year for the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association. Just as 2010 saw a huge leap forward in terms of the AUGSA's governance and management structure, 2011 has seen tremendous gains in terms of the service and advocacy work that the Association has been able to accomplish. While the Governance Committee did review and revise the bylaws this year, our governance structure has been well established and few major changes were required. As a result, the AUGSA has been able to devote more energy and time to focusing outwardly instead of inwardly.

As I sat down to write my report last year, the AUGSA had offered a number of new services for the first time. The AUGSA Outstanding Achievement Awards were brand new and the first Meet & Greet event had been held in Edmonton. Since then, both of these major initiatives have expanded. The budget for the Outstanding Achievement Awards has been expanded and the total number of awards for graduate students has increased from three to four. The Association has significantly increased the number of Meet & Greet events held, holding one approximately every two months. This has allowed AUGSA to connect with AU graduate students in Calgary, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Ottawa, and Halifax. Students at these events frequently talk about how much they appreciate the opportunity to connect with their peers and professors in a face-to-face setting, so more Meet & Greets are planned for 2012. Keep an eye on the AUGSA newsletter to see if we'll be hosting an event near you.

The Association's advocacy efforts have increased in the past year, as well. The AUGSA has continued to be involved with the Alberta Graduate Council (AGC) and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). 2011 was a big year for the AUGSA's role in CASA, as our President was elected as the Chair of the CASA Graduate Council. Chairing the Graduate Council has given the AUGSA a powerful voice at the federal level. Because AU graduate students come from all across the country, having our President take on this role has been a great boon for AU grad students.

Overall, this year was another good one for the AUGSA. I look forward to working with the incoming Executive and Council to ensure that 2012 is a great one as well.

Sincerely,

Adam Snider  
Operations Coordinator

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## Chief Returning Officer's Report – 2012

I oversaw the AUGSA's elections and referendum this year and dealt with issues as they arose, none of which proved to be major. I am pleased to report that the election process ran smoothly and the results of both elections and of the referendum were fair and accurate representations of the wishes of the AU graduate student body. With a voter turnout of 6.63% in the Executive Election and 14.39% on the referendum question, the AUGSA had the highest voter turnout of any graduate students' association in Alberta.

The results of the Executive Election were:

### **President**

Amanda Nielsen - Acclaimed  
Amanda Nielsen is declared elected.

### **Vice President (External)**

Round 1 - 194 votes cast this round

1. Lisa Barrett received 135 first place votes (70%)
2. Moiz Bhamani received 59 first place votes (30%)

Lisa Barrett is declared elected.

### **Vice President (Academic)**

Round 1 - 180 votes cast this round

1. Rob Janzen received 77 first place votes (43%)
2. Olivia Meyia received 73 first place votes (41%)
3. Conrad Westendorf received 30 first place votes (17%)

No winner declared in Round 1. Conrad Westendorf was eliminated.

Round 2 - 172 votes cast this round

1. Rob Janzen received 83 first place votes (48%)
2. Olivia Meyia received 89 first place votes (52%)

Olivia Meyia is declared elected.

### **Vice President (Operations & Finance)**

Round 1 - 187 votes cast this round

1. Margaret Clappison received 89 first place votes (48%)
2. Wilson Ho received 98 first place votes (52%)

Wilson Ho is declared elected.

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## VOTER TURNOUT

196 students cast votes, out of a possible 2957, for a total voter turnout of 6.63%.

The results of the Faculty and Centre Representative Election were:

Because some candidates withdrew from the election race, all of the remaining candidates won by acclamation.

## AUGSA Health & Dental Plan Referendum

The results of the AUGSA Health & Dental Plan Referendum on the question, "*Are you in favour of the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association implementing a mandatory student health and dental plan for full-time, program students living in Canada, as per the information available [here](#), YES or NO?*," were:

In total, 552 ballots were cast for a voter turnout of 14.39%. A minimum turnout of 10% was required in order for the results to be binding. With 159 "yes" votes, 392 "no" votes, and one ballot left blank, the AUGSA will not be implementing the proposed health and dental plan.

It was a pleasure serving as your Chief Returning Officer. I would like to thank all candidates and also those volunteers who assisted on the Elections and Referenda Committee. I congratulate those who were successful in their electoral endeavours and wish you well in the upcoming term.

A big thank you is due to Adam Snider and Amanda Nielsen for their initial and ongoing assistance. Special thanks to Drew Martin for his advice and impartiality in providing information in the referendum and finally Jay Ward at Whitematter for his flexibility in ensuring that every student who was eligible to vote was able to.

Sincerely,

Kevin Flynn  
Chief Returning Officer, 2012  
AU MBA Alumni

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## Faculty and Centre Representative Reports

### **Wilson Ho – Outgoing Faculty of Business Representative; Incoming VPOF**

I believe AUGSA's biggest accomplishment in 2011 has been to further reach out to the graduate students of Athabasca University. My goal for 2012 is to continue the effort in linking graduate students and the rest of the Athabasca University community to ensure the student voice is heard. My new role as Vice-President Operations and Finance will also help in creating a lasting legacy for AUGSA.

Wilson Ho

Faculty of Business Representative

Master of Business Administration Student

### **Ric Wheeler – Faculty of Business Representative**

As a Faculty of Business Representative on the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association (AUGSA), I am honoured. My name is Ric Wheeler. I believe my involvement in the organization has enhanced and contributed to my student life while at AU.

AUGSA is the student voice and an advocate of all AU graduate students.

While I was one of your Faculty of Business Representatives, I attended bi-monthly council meetings, participated and contributed on special committees such as the Student Awards and Governance Policy Review Committees, and have furthered services and advocacy for all AU students. As the 2011/2012 term is nearing completion, I would like to encourage and challenge students to get involved with AUGSA. It will help with your networking, help with your overall experience at AU, and also expand your knowledge and expertise. All these things are valuable and priceless in your future business and career endeavours.

Ric Wheeler

Faculty of Business Representative

Master of Business Administration Student

### **Moiz Bhamani – Faculty of Business Representative**

I personally believe the biggest accomplishment for AUGSA was to brand itself and build its reputation even more than before. Between when I started at Athabasca (3 years ago) and now, AUGSA has really gained a valuable reputation in front of the student body.

In the next term, I would like to build on the foundation of AUGSA's growing reputation and have more students volunteer and participate in AUGSA's initiatives such as networking events. The most relevant and valuable services for the members of my faculty have been networking events where business students can meet each other.

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I believe I did a fair job of representing my faculty by attending all meetings and contributing towards the matters under consideration. I also kept in touch with my faculty and made my peers aware of my involvement with AUGSA—what it can do for students and how we can help.

I sent out periodic emails to students in my faculty about AUGSA events and initiatives so students would know what AUGSA was all about and how and when to ask for assistance if they needed any. I also encouraged my faculty to attend AUGSA networking events and participate in volunteering when opportunities arise.

Moiz Bhamani

Faculty of Business Representative

Master of Business Administration Student

### **Meg Andronowska – Faculty of Health Disciplines Rep**

This past year has been a tremendous experience serving my fellow students as a Faculty of Health Disciplines Representative. I learned a lot by attending council meetings and participating in discussion on the Landing. I also participated in additional sessions such as the strategic planning session in April 2011 and the recent health plan referendum discussions.

The most rewarding aspects of my role were engaging and advocating both with and on behalf of students within the GCAP program. There are several challenges within this program and I was delighted to provide support via email, assistance by attending meetings with the Dean, and responding to student concerns in a timely and professional manner.

I believe I contributed meaningfully and conscientiously to discussions and debates during AUGSA council meetings. I was respectful of the committee's time and processes, always submitting my regrets if I was unable to attend. I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to learn about other faculty, centre or institute students' experiences, especially as there were many differences yet so many similarities. Serving on the council really helped to unite my experience and bring about a greater sense of participation or identity with Athabasca University.

I look forward to serving another year on Council and continuing to work with and for students. In the coming year, I would like to work more closely with my fellow health disciplines representatives to reach out to more students beyond our individual faculties/centres/institutes.

Meg Andronowska

Faculty of Health Disciplines Representative

Master of Counselling Student

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### **Steve Harris – Faculty of Science and Technology Rep**

As the AUGSA Council Representative for Science and Technology this year, a significant part of my time was spent representing the views of the graduate students in my Faculty to Council on a number of important issues surrounding the strategic direction and policies of the organization. This year we were able to support several AUGSA Executive moves towards improving the representation of graduate students at both the federal and provincial level. We were also able to support improved student outreach through several meet-and-greet events in a number of Canadian cities where students could come and meet with one another, and with members of the AUGSA Executive.

Of course, part of the responsibility of my position was also to spread the word about the work and direction of AUGSA back to the students I represent. To this end, I have fielded several requests for information on various AUGSA-related topics from students in my Faculty—most notable among these being the vote on whether or not to implement the new health benefits package to all full time graduate students.

Finally, and probably most importantly from an organizational standpoint, Council voted on a new several important changes to the AUGSA Constitution – changes which included an increased voice for the Faculty of Science and Technology in the form of an additional Council Representative, to better reflect graduate student enrollment patterns.

Steve Harris

Faculty of Science and Technology Representative  
Master of Science in Information Systems Student

### **Adam Chisholm – Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Rep**

I am a student in the MAIS program and my position on council is Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty Representative. My purpose is to serve the best interests of Humanities and Social Sciences students within the context of the Graduate Student Association. Issues that arose and were addressed this year include GSA swag, governance review, the proposed health plan, meet-and-greet planning and spending, and options for membership of the AUGSA in larger graduate students' associations such as the Alberta Graduate Council and the Canadian Alliance of Student Association.

As a Faculty Representative, my role in these issues was to bring up any concerns, suggest changes, and cast a yea or nay vote on each motion. The planning and research for most motions presented was based on the hard work of the Executive, though I did base some votes and decisions on my own independent research as well.

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I was also a member of the Governance Review committee, which provided a fresh look at the rules of governance by which AUGSA operates. This included recommending and evaluating content or wording changes to increase transparency and responsiveness to the needs of Athabasca Graduate students. Issues that I spoke on particularly are rejecting the possibility of allowing electoral slates (as I believe they reduce the democratic options of the voter, and partisan politics are unnecessary in so small an organization), geographical limitation of AUGSA executive members (which is logical because of their meetings, but must remain loosely interpreted so that a matter of a dozen miles does not prevent election of an exceptional candidate), and limitations on the rate of increase of GSA fees (which I felt should be clearly spelled out for transparency's sake).

I also attended the Toronto meet and greet, where I got a better sense of the requirements of students from the diverse faculties, as well as the common complaints and praises of students in the MAIS program, as it was the only Humanities and Social Science program represented at the meet-and-greet. I have also met in person with several MAIS students to discuss the challenges they face and what they find exciting about Athabasca courses.

Adam Chisholm

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Representative  
Master of Arts – Integrated Studies Student

### **Margot Van Sluytman – Humanities and Social Sciences Rep**

I believe that AUGSA's biggest accomplishment in 2011/2012 was coming together and discussing vital issues such as open access, a health and dental plan, and creating ways to make Athabasca University become even more widely known and respected.

My goals for 2012—though I will only be on AUGSA until May 2012—it is my goal to continue to participate in our dialogues and meetings, and afterwards, sharing about the rich environment that is Athabasca University.

The most relevant and meaningful things that AUGSA provided to my faculty were: Ongoing dialogue; Accessibility; Timely support.

I feel that I represented the students in my faculty to the AUGSA to the best of my abilities.

I feel that AUGSA has done a good job connecting with students. AUGSA has made every attempt to be on all social media, and did a fabulous job with the meet and greets. I attended the Calgary Meet and Greet in September, and was delighted and inspired.

Margot Van Sluytman

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Representative  
Master of Arts – Integrated Studies Student

### **Sarah Gauvreau – Centre of Distance Education Representative**

It is hard to pinpoint one of AUGSA's biggest accomplishments for the 2011/2012 school year, with all the lobbying that was performed and all the services to students that were established, but what stands out in my mind as one of the highlighted achievements was the ability to bring

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ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

students together in a face-to-face context in the many of the “Meet and Greet” opportunities and also the ability to provide monetary awards to graduate students.

My goals for AUGSA 2012 are to see more students utilize its services and to increase awareness. The fact that I didn't even know that this wonderful organization was available until I received an email from the Centre of Distance Education that they were looking for representation indicates that many students are still in the dark about AUGSA. It was also mentioned in 2011 that that AUGSA was going to look into TA and RA jobs for graduate students. I think that this should be fully investigated. I was lucky enough to pair up with a faculty member and become her RA. This experience brought my graduate student experience to a whole new level and I think all students should have that opportunity.

I believe most items discussed pertained to all faculties equally. I cannot comment that one was more relevant than another for the Centre of Distance Education.

I believe that I represented the Centre of Distance Education to the best to my ability. I would let the students know in the courses that I was taking that I was their rep, but that only targeted a small portion of the students in the faculty. I think that I was underutilized, as I didn't hear from any MDE students. I think that AUGSA has taken many avenues to try and reach out to the students in our faculty, as with the rest of the student population. However, I believe that as many of the students are adult learners with many responsibilities, such as family and work obligations, that some just can't spare the time to get involved with school politics.

I found this a very rewarding opportunity to serve my fellow students. Being a rep via distance does present some issues, but moving forward, as more students become aware of the services available to them, and the utilization of social media to bring this awareness, then AUGSA will be utilized to its full potential.

Sarah Gauvreau

Centre for Distance Education Representative

Master of Education in Distance Education Student

### **Jade Clarke – Centre for Distance Education Representative**

This year, as a Master of Education student and representative on the AUGSA Council, my role was to act as a liaison between the students of the Centre for Distance Education and the GSA. This involved delivering updates regarding current developments and decisions to the students and relaying any concerns or questions they may have to the GSA.

Jade Clarke

Centre for Distance Education Representative

Master of Education in Distance Education Student

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ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## Speaker of Council's Report

I have been the Athabasca University Graduate Students' Association's Speaker of Council for approximately one year and during that time I have watched the AUGSA make great strides forward in terms of their governance structure during meetings. Since formalizing the Speaker role the AUGSA has been able to grow in two key ways:

- The President is now able to be fully and actively involved in council meetings. Prior to creating the role of Speaker of Council, the President was responsible for chairing council meetings. Relieved of this duty, the President is now able to fully participate in meetings as an active member of the council team, rather than as a neutral chairperson.
- Robert's Rules of Order are followed more closely. Like most organizations, the AUGSA has developed a number of standing orders that allow meetings to run smoothly and effectively while meeting the specific needs of the organization. However, these standing orders deal with a limited number of circumstances and the formal introduction of Robert's Rules of Order has brought a greater degree of efficiency and efficacy to AUGSA council meetings.

It has been a pleasure to serve the AUGSA as Speaker of Council for the past year. The creation of this role has greatly contributed to the governance of the AUGSA and I believe that it will continue to do so in the future, whether I am reappointed or someone new takes over the role in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Lorna Howieson  
Speaker of Council, 2011/12  
Master of Business Administration Student

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**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**Financial Statements**

**Year Ended December 31, 2011**

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

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Year Ended December 31, 2011

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## Auditor's Report

To the Members of ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION,

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION, which comprise the statements of financial position as at December 31, 2011 and the statements of operations and changes in fund balances and of cash flows for the years ended December 31, 2011, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

### *Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### *Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control.

An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

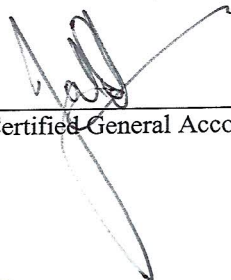
We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### *Opinion*

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION as at December 31, 2011 and its financial performance and its cash flows for the years ended December 31, 2011, in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

April 27, 2012

Edmonton, Alberta

  
Certified General Accountants

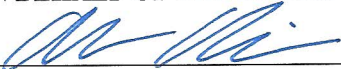
**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**Statement of Financial Position**

**December 31, 2011**

	2011	2010
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Cash	\$ 34,647	\$ 40,536
Accounts receivable	33,960	51,151
Prepaid expenses	71	-
	<b>\$ 68,678</b>	<b>\$ 91,687</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Accounts payable	\$ 8,748	\$ 12,997
Employee deductions payable	172	4,122
	<b>8,920</b>	<b>17,119</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted Fund	<b>59,758</b>	<b>74,568</b>
	<b>\$ 68,678</b>	<b>\$ 91,687</b>

**ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD**

 \_\_\_\_\_ Director

\_\_\_\_\_ Director

**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**Statement of Revenues and Expenditures**

**Year Ended December 31, 2011**

	2011	2010
<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 300,160</b>	<b>\$ 253,920</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries and wages	175,065	149,546
Travel	27,151	9,653
Memberships	23,012	-
Office	17,589	8,380
Consulting fees	14,788	20,061
Donations	12,725	5,370
Training	12,099	9,617
Professional fees	11,998	11,550
Meals and entertainment	8,777	2,684
Telephone	5,374	2,316
Interest and bank charges	3,597	478
Insurance	1,927	1,850
Rental	617	357
Advertising and promotion	250	550
Miscellaneous	1	(1)
Legal fees	-	2,100
	<b>314,970</b>	<b>224,511</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ (14,810)</b>	<b>\$ 29,409</b>

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year Ended December 31, 2011

	General Fund	Restricted Fund	2011	2010
<b>NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	\$ 74,568	\$ -	\$ 74,568	\$ 45,158
Excess of revenue over expenses	(14,810)	-	(14,810)	29,409
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	\$ 59,758	\$ -	\$ 59,758	\$ 74,567

**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**Statement of Cash Flows**

**Year Ended December 31, 2011**

	2011	2010
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ (14,810)	\$ 29,409
Changes in non-cash working capital:		
Accounts receivable	17,191	(36,256)
Accounts payable	(4,249)	8,749
Prepaid expenses	(71)	-
Wages payable	-	(3,127)
Employee deductions payable	(3,950)	2,833
	<b>8,921</b>	<b>(27,801)</b>
<b>INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH FLOW</b>	<b>(5,889)</b>	<b>1,608</b>
Cash - beginning of year	40,536	38,928
<b>CASH - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 34,647</b>	<b>\$ 40,536</b>

# ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2011

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### 1. NATURE OF OPERATIONS

The mission of the Association shall be to foster a cohesive graduate student community, act as an advocate for graduate students, and build a positive relationship with the University. The Association is incorporated under the Provincial Society Act as a not-for-profit organization and is a registered charity under the Income Tax Act and is therefore exempt from income taxes.

### 2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

#### **Use of estimates**

When preparing financial statements according with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organization (ASNPO), we make estimates and assumptions relating to:

- Reported amounts of revenue and expenses
- Reported amounts of assets and liabilities
- Disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities

We base our assumptions on a number of factors including historical experience, current events and actions that the organization may undertake in the future, and other assumptions that we believe are reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results could differ from those estimates under different conditions and assumptions. We use estimates when accounting for certain items such as useful lives of capital assets and impairment of long-lived assets.

#### **Fund accounting**

The Association follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions.

The General Fund accounts for the organization's program delivery and administrative activities. This fund reports unrestricted resources and restricted operating grants. Since the Association is a not-for-profit association, fund accounting will be utilized.

#### **Revenue recognition**

Restricted contributions related to general operations are recognized as revenue of the General Fund in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. All other restricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate restricted fund.

Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the General Fund in the year received or receivable if the amount to be recorded can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assumed.

#### **Contributed services**

Volunteers contribute about 2600 hours per year to assist the Association in carrying out its service delivery activities. Because of the difficulty of determining their fair value, contributed services are not recognized in the financial statements.

#### **Capital assets**

Purchased capital assets are recorded at cost. Contributed capital assets are recorded at fair value at the date of contribution. Equipment purchased with value of \$2,500 or lower is expensed in the year it is purchased.



ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2011

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3. **FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

Our financial instruments consist of cash, receivables, and payables. Unless otherwise noted, it is our opinion that the organization is not exposed to significant interest, currency, or credit risks arising from these financial instruments. The fair value of the instruments approximates their carrying values, unless otherwise noted.

The organization is exposed to financial risk that arises from the fluctuation in interest rates and in the credit quality of its customers.

**Credit risk**

Our credit risk consists principally of cash and cash equivalents, and accounts receivable. We maintained cash and cash equivalents with reputable and major financial institutions.

**Currency risk**

The organization does not have any significant currency risks.

**Cash and cash equivalents**

There are no derivative financial instruments to mitigate these risks.