



AUSU elections allow AU undergraduate students to elect their student council. Elections for nine council seats are typically held every two years.

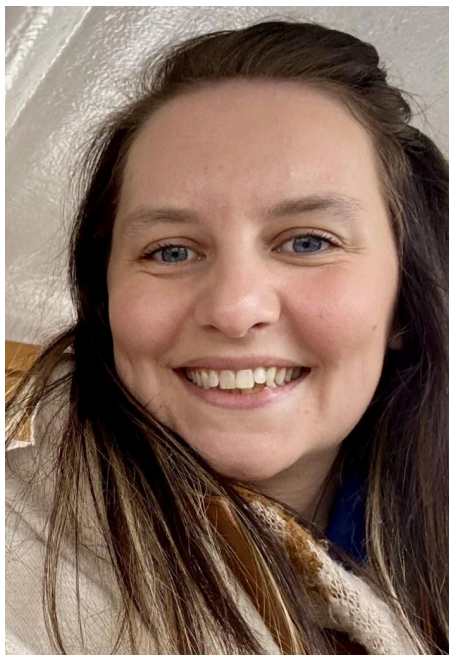
AUSU 2026 General Election

The nomination period is closed and it's time to meet your candidates! The following 12 Athabasca University students are eager to get involved, gain experience, and represent fellow students as part of an amazing team!

AUSU student councillors represent AU undergrads and advocate on their behalf. They also guide and direct your students' union in providing services and support for AU students and contribute to creating a vibrant online student community.

Meet the Candidates

Amy Nicks 📍 AB



(Running for: Finance & Accountability Councillor; Wellness & Accessibility Councillor).

Hi! My name is Amy Nicks. I live in Sherwood Park, AB. I am completing my Bachelor of Arts in Psychology & English! I am interested in running for AUSU Student Council because I love helping people. This experience would be both personally rewarding and professionally meaningful. I have spent the majority of my career in customer service at Starbucks, which has really inspired me to pursue my degree. I have ~ 8 years of experience supporting operations with ~2 years managing operations for a team of ~ 23 team members while helping hundreds of customers. I know how important clear communication, diligence, authenticity and accountability are to ensuring my team and customers are taken care of. Within ~6 months of transferring to a team that was struggling, through my

leadership, our customer experience score grew from 23/100 to 97/100. I am particularly interested in the role of Finance & Accountability as I love analyzing and solving problems while finding creative solutions! However, I am open to supporting wherever my skills best align with the goals of AUSU!

Amy's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I am motivated to serve on the student council because I love helping people and I love that Athabasca University provides so much accessibility for students in its online format. I would love to partner with AUSU to provide meaningful support to students that will be helpful to my AUSU team, fellow students as well as allow me to grow personally and professionally.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

I am driven by honesty, integrity and accountability because I believe, as a leader, I am setting the precedent, example and expectations through my own conduct of what I expect from others and in how I seek to drive meaningful change. Prior to driving change, I believe it is fundamentally important to gather feedback and listen to the needs, wants and experiences of those I am leading in order to have a thorough understanding of their challenges and to prioritize future actions accordingly.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

My strengths are that I am kind, empathetic and analytic. When there is a problem, challenge or obstacle to overcome I love exercising my creative problem solving skills to find a solution. I also am able to adapt my approach to be proactive to reduce the opportunity for the same problem to occur in the future. I am great at implementing systems, routines and processes to keep a team organized and efficient while uplifting those around me.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

Responsible use of student fees means that student fees are being trusted to AUSU to be used in the students' best interest. It is our responsibility to ensure there are systems of tracking, clear reporting and honest communication about how funds are being used to ensure honesty and integrity.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

In order to stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership, I plan to ask questions and listen for feedback from people on the team who have more seniority in order to discover what the current process is for gathering feedback from a primarily remote population of students. Once I gather feedback, if I have ideas (I typically do), I will share my ideas. Are open forums used and surveys? I am not sure what the current process is so I would need more information, but once I have that information I would ensure I prioritize staying informed.

Andrea Honch  AB



(Running for: Finance & Accountability Councillor; Wellness & Accessibility Councillor).

Hello! I am a mother of 6, treasurer of our local non-profit food bank, and Chairperson of the Parent Council at my children's school. I believe in accountability, and I take full responsibility for my decisions, and am the first to admit when I have made a mistake. I believe in pro-actively solving problems with understanding, kindness, and compassion. I treat everyone with dignity, equality, and respect, regardless of their background. I have experience with being transparent with finances and about decisions, intentions, and potential risks in decision making. I will act in a way that minimizes negative consequences and actively promotes the best interests of my fellow students. I will stick to my high moral standards and be mindful of AUSU's core values when acting on your behalf. I will strive to collaborate, gain diverse insights, and help you out in every way possible. I also have a son with autism, so I have experience advocating for students with disabilities, and have real life experience with many academic accommodations and how they impact learning.

Andrea's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

Everyday on facebook I see posts of students struggling, with many common themes such as student finance, tutor availability, and fairness and timeliness in marking, to name a few. I strongly feel that I have the experience and capability to help these student voices be heard, and to ensure that action is taken to help them.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

I have a strong moral compass and the motivation to do the right thing. I will take full responsibility for my actions and their consequences, and I am the first person to admit when I have made a mistake. I will work to pro-actively solve problems, with kindness

and compassion for what my fellow students are going through. I will treat each person with dignity, equality, and respect, regardless of their background. I will be open and honest with students about decisions being made, and do my best to ensure that all individuals are treated equally.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

I have strong leadership skills and a solid foundation of financial management skills. I currently serve as Treasurer for our local non-profit food bank, which has given me a lot of experience with managing finances as well as being accountable to the public and meeting federal guidelines for transparency. I also serve as Chairperson on the Parent Council at my children's school. This has given me experience in leading meetings, writing agendas, managing people, and solving problems as they arise.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

Responsible use of student fees to me, means managing the funds available in a responsible and transparent manner, and allocating them where they are needed most to be able to help as many students as possible, from a diverse pool of backgrounds.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I will be an active member of social media pages where AUSU students gather. I will be available by phone, email, facebook message, or text to chat with students about their experiences and struggles. I will seek out the opinions and experiences of my fellow students, and strive to do my best to support each and every student on their educational journey, to the very best of my ability. I will listen to what the AUSU members have to say, and do my best to serve them.

Carmen Griffin 📍 BC



(Running for: Financial Support & Access Councillor; Equity Belonging & Reconciliation Councillor).

I am an Athabasca University student, a parent of two young children, and a full-time professional—so I understand firsthand the realities of balancing school, work, and family. It has taken me four years to complete my program while managing these competing demands, and that experience has shaped my resilience, adaptability, and commitment to meaningful progress. I also understand that prioritizing yourself is not always possible when you are managing

competing responsibilities, and I want to help shape education in a way that acknowledges and supports that reality.

As an immigrant and the first in my family to attend university, the stakes are deeply personal. Education is a path to changing intergenerational outcomes, and I carry that responsibility with pride and determination.

With over 12 years of experience in project management, I bring strong skills in scoping issues, collaborating with diverse groups, and delivering on commitments. I value open dialogue, equity, and agile decision-making, and I approach challenges with honesty, accountability, and a focus on results.

As online learning becomes the primary method of education, it's critical that we address its gaps while building on its strengths. I am running to increase the visibility of students, represent the issues that matter most, and ensure student voices are reflected in real decisions. I am a direct, reliable leader who listens, learns, and follows through.

Carmen's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I am motivated to serve on AUSU Council to meaningfully improve the student experience by ensuring learner voices are reflected in decisions that impact them. As a distance student balancing full-time work and a young family, I understand firsthand the challenges of accessibility, connection, and time constraints. I want to help strengthen supports and foster a more inclusive, engaging student community. I am also eager to contribute to governance work, including policy, budgeting, and strategic planning, while continuing to build leadership skills. Serving on Council is an opportunity to create practical, lasting improvements for students while growing as an effective and accountable leader.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

The principles that guide me when taking on responsibilities that affect others are equity, accountability, and long-term impact. I believe decisions should be inclusive and considerate of diverse student circumstances, ensuring fair access to supports and opportunities. I also focus on sustainability—prioritizing solutions that are not only effective in the short term but can be maintained and built upon over time.

I approach decisions with transparency, thoughtful analysis, and a commitment to listening to those impacted. My goal is to ensure that actions are responsible, well-informed, and contribute to meaningful, lasting improvements rather than quick fixes.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

I bring a diverse perspective shaped by both my cultural background and professional experience, along with a strong foundation in collaboration and accountability. Through my work and studies, I have learned the value of listening carefully to different viewpoints, engaging constructively, and making decisions that reflect collective needs. I am an agile thinker who can adapt to changing priorities while maintaining focus on outcomes. My experience working across institutions has strengthened my ability to navigate complex environments, communicate effectively, and contribute to thoughtful, balanced decision-making. I approach responsibilities with integrity and a commitment to follow-through, ensuring that ideas translate into meaningful action.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

Responsible use of student fees means ensuring every dollar is managed with transparency, accountability, and clear value to students. These funds should be directed toward services, supports, and advocacy that directly enhance the student experience and address real needs.

It also means making thoughtful, evidence-based decisions that balance immediate priorities with long-term sustainability. I believe in regular evaluation of spending to ensure effectiveness, clear communication with students on how funds are used, and a commitment to equity so benefits are accessible to a diverse student population. Ultimately, responsible stewardship is about trust—using resources in a way that reflects the interests and priorities of the students who contribute them.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I will stay informed by actively seeking out and listening to student voices through multiple channels, including surveys, forums, social media, and direct engagement. I believe it's important to create approachable and inclusive opportunities for students to share their experiences, especially those who may feel underrepresented.

I will also review available data and feedback trends to better understand emerging needs and priorities. Regular communication with fellow Council members and student groups will help ensure a well-rounded perspective. Most importantly, I will remain accessible and responsive, creating a feedback loop where students feel heard and see how their input informs decisions.



(Running for: Digital Citizenship & Community Councillor; Learning & Success Councillor).

Prior to studying in AU, Cleo has served her former college as a student council member and a VP Internal. Therefore, she's not unfamiliar in student advocacy, suggesting changes for improvement, and stakeholder communication. Furthermore, she was a Peer Mentor, Resident Assistant, and Project Lead for Enactus. With this diverse background, she offers the council and AU a multitude of skills. As a former student council, all of her actions are student-led, prioritizing the needs and wellbeing of her peers. She values clear communication, collaboration, and creating environments where students

feel heard and supported.

As a full-time employee, she understands the delicate act of balancing life, work, and studies. One of her main goals is supporting students with these challenges through either digitally or in policies. She is particularly interested in leveraging digital platforms and systems to improve communication, accessibility, and student engagement.

Cleo's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I know and understand the struggle of feeling isolated while studying, which makes brings challenges. This feeling motivates me to serve in the council as I want to create initiatives where it brings people together and have a virtual community, despite the distance. In addition, I already have student council and leadership experience, which I am eager to contribute to the AUSU Council. As I'd like to say – if I'm going to do something, I will do it right.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

Accountability, flexibility, and creativity. I think when leading others, it is important to have take accountability of every action taken. Furthermore, with the fast-paced world right now, it is important to tackle challenges with a flexible and creative approach.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

In my previous college, I served as VP Internal – someone who handled the finance and policy committee. Prior to that position, I was a council member, and I assisted with event marketing and planning, social media content creation, and driving engagement.

Beyond my council experience, I was Resident Assistant, Peer Support, and Project Lead, giving me a diverse background. These experiences honed my communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills. At the core of my myriads of skills – I mostly bring passion and commitment to students.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

It means that the collected student fees are used appropriately. The usage of this should reflect student needs, and should be used to enhance student experience, address student concerns, and improve student learning. In my eyes, the AUSU Council represents the student body; therefore, every undertaking should be student-led.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I will be focused on developing a digital presence. With AU not having a campus, it makes connecting challenging. However, it is not impossible. I plan to join student groups, introduce myself virtually, and connect with professors to see if there's other platforms I can join to develop a virtual presence. The email list is also crucial; however, it is important to provide informative newsletter to students. Furthermore, asking for feedback will also be instrumental in connecting with the student-body.

Ellen Cobham  AB



(Running for: Wellness & Accessibility Councillor).

I am a Bachelor of Arts student at Athabasca University, majoring in Psychology with a minor in Inclusive Education. I am also a mature student, wife, and mother of three. Balancing family life and academics has shown me how important accessible and flexible learning environments are.

I care deeply about student wellness and believe academic success is closely connected to mental health, accessibility, and feeling supported. Many students face barriers that can make it harder to succeed, especially those with families or non-traditional paths. I want to advocate for practical changes that better support students in their daily lives.

If elected, I will focus on improving communication, increasing awareness of available supports, and promoting barrier-free access to education. I am committed to listening to student voices and taking meaningful action to create a more supportive and equitable university experience.

Ellen's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I am motivated to serve on the AUSU Council because I want to contribute to meaningful, student-focused change. Many students face challenges that impact their ability to succeed, and I believe those experiences should be reflected in how decisions are made. I am especially interested in strengthening student supports, improving access to resources, and ensuring student voices are heard. This role is an opportunity to be part of solutions that make a real difference in students' academic and personal experiences.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

When I take on responsibilities that affect others, I focus on being thoughtful, honest, and consistent. I try to understand different perspectives before making decisions, especially when those decisions may impact people in different ways. I believe it is important to follow through, communicate clearly, and take responsibility for outcomes. I also value fairness and making sure people feel heard. These principles help me make decisions that are balanced, respectful, and focused on what will best support the people involved.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

I bring strong time management, organization, and the ability to balance multiple responsibilities. Managing school alongside family life, while overcoming challenges along the way, has strengthened my ability to stay committed, adapt, and follow through. I am a thoughtful decision-maker who considers different perspectives before acting. I also value clear communication and believe it is important that people feel heard and understood. These strengths allow me to contribute in a way that is reliable, practical, and focused on supporting students effectively.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

Responsible use of student fees means ensuring funds are used in a way that directly benefits students and supports their academic experience. It requires careful decision-making, transparency, and accountability. I believe student fees should be used efficiently and thoughtfully, with a focus on services, supports, and initiatives that have a meaningful impact. It is also important that students understand how their fees are being used. Decisions should reflect student needs and priorities while avoiding unnecessary spending.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I will stay informed by actively listening to students and creating opportunities for feedback. This includes engaging with students through surveys, discussions, and online spaces where they already connect. I believe it is important to hear from a wide range of students, including those who may not always speak up. I will also take time to review student concerns, trends, and feedback shared through AUSU channels. Staying informed is an ongoing process, and I am committed to being approachable, responsive, and open to learning from student experiences.

Gabrielle Wilson 📍 MB



(Running for: Equity Belonging & Reconciliation Councillor; Public Policy & Advocacy Councillor).

A committed student with a strong focus on advocacy, accountability, and improving the student experience, currently pursuing a degree in Human Resources and Labour Relations. Passionate about ensuring students feel heard, represented, and supported in an online learning environment.

Brings practical experience in advocacy and member engagement through work with unions, where efforts helped rebuild trust, increase participation, and strengthen communication between members and leadership, while encouraging involvement in apprenticeship opportunities.

Guided by a commitment to transparency and fairness, with a goal of ensuring decisions and initiatives create meaningful, positive outcomes for students. Aims to strengthen communication between AUSU and students, increase accessibility to supports, and ensure diverse student voices are reflected in decision-making.

Focused on listening, taking action, and contributing to a council that is responsive, accountable, and dedicated to student success.

Gabrielle's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I am very passionate about advocacy and ensuring that student's voices are effectively heard by leadership in key decision-making processes. I want to actively work to be part of the change that makes student's experiences better. I see this as an opportunity to grow as a leader while also contributing to real change. It would be an honour to be part of the team making decision that affect the students within Athabasca University.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

I am guided by integrity, accountability, determination, and fairness. I believe that decisions should be transparent, well-informed, and made with the interests of the broader group in mind. Personal gains should never be a consideration in responsibilities and choices that affect others. I prioritize listening and ensure that I keep an open door and an open mind for others to express concerns and ideas. I value trust and determination, knowing that trust is built by the follow through of actions. I approach responsibility with a service mindset. It is my job to ensure I am fulfilling my responsibilities to the best interests of the members.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

I bring a combination of advocacy experience, strong communication skills, and a deep commitment to representing others to the best of my abilities. In my everyday life I am a Union Representative. Throughout my career, I've developed the ability to listen to concerns, navigate complex issues, and advocate for fair, practical solutions. This role has also taught me the importance of looking at issues from the viewpoints of others. I have successfully rebuilt union engagement in the organization I represent by fostering trust, transparency, and an open line of communication. Overall, I bring a balanced approach of someone who can listen, lead, and take action while staying grounded in accountability and acting in the best interests of the members I represent.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

Responsible use of student fees means considering the return of investment to the students for every dollar spent. Councillors need to be transparent, accountable, and careful in financial decisions. Funds need to be used efficiently and in a way that aligns with student priorities. Fees should be spent in a way that supports services and initiatives that provide a clear and measurable value to the student body. Students should understand where their money is going and feel confident that money is being used for their best interests.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I will stay informed by ensuring accessibility is a priority. I want students to know I have an "open door" policy. If elected, I will ensure that students have access to me by phone, text, and email to ensure that anyone can reach out at their convenience. I will also ensure I keep timely response times and work towards maintaining a 24 hour or less response time. Students are welcome to reach out to me anytime.



(Running for: Wellness & Accessibility Councillor; Learning & Success Councillor).

My name is Kanzas (like the state), and I am majoring in Labour Studies with a minor in French. I am proud to be First Nations, queer, and neurodivergent. As a retired paramedic, I am now pursuing a second career as a union organizer, educator, or representative. I am deeply committed to advancing student and workers' rights, and I see serving as an AUSU Councilor as an opportunity to advocate for meaningful, student-focused change. I support equitable and transparent grading practices, and I will work to ensure students have clear, respectful processes to address concerns with tutors, particularly when questions arise around grading or academic expectations. I also advocate for reduced administrative fees to improve affordability, and for expanded access to ebooks with read-aloud functionality and audiobooks to better support students with ADD/ADHD and diverse learning needs. I am committed to making AUSU more accessible, accountable, and responsive to students.

Kanzas's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I am majoring in Labour Studies with a minor in French, and I am pursuing a second career as a union organizer, educator, or representative. I am deeply committed to advancing student and workers' rights. Serving on the AUSU Council would allow me to advocate for meaningful, student-focused change while gaining experience representing and supporting a diverse student body.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

The principles that guide me are empathy, compassion, objectivity, direct communication, and transparency. I strive to meet people where they are at by actively listening and asking what they need. I believe in advocating for others and amplifying their voices, while respecting their autonomy and not speaking for them unless asked. I aim to make decisions that are fair, thoughtful, and informed by the perspectives of those affected.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

I bring strong critical thinking skills and the ability to make difficult decisions under pressure from my experience as a paramedic. I am compassionate, honest, and committed to helping others. As a First Nations, queer, and neurodivergent woman, I bring lived experience that helps me understand systemic barriers. I am also a member

of my local Industrial Workers of the World branch, which reflects my commitment to collective action and supporting workers.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

Responsible use of student fees means ensuring transparency, accountability, and student involvement in decision-making. Like collective bargaining, students should have opportunities to provide input on priorities and how funds are allocated. It is important to clearly communicate the scope of AUSU's role and decisions. Even when not everyone agrees, a democratic and transparent process helps students feel informed, respected, and confident that their fees are being used responsibly.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I will stay informed by using a combination of surveys, direct outreach, and regular communication with students and Council members. I would also prioritize accessible forums or virtual office hours to hear directly from students. Monitoring student discussions on platforms like social media can also provide insight into emerging concerns. Using multiple channels ensures a broader and more inclusive understanding of student needs.

Kelly Miller 📍 AB



(Running for: Council Chair)

Kelly Miller brings an extensive professional background in systems coordination and community advocacy, supporting non-profit organizations alongside public engagement and safety initiatives for the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Police Service. With a proven track record of advocating for marginalized populations and navigating complex bureaucracies, Kelly's work is driven by a commitment to ensuring individuals are never left to navigate difficult institutional systems alone.

Currently pursuing a BSc in physiology, physics, and computing at Athabasca University, Kelly specializes in analyzing and improving human-centered systems. Professionally, this has included implementing LEAN process improvements to cut administrative waste and utilizing databases to support grant reporting and outreach initiatives. With formal certifications

in Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) and Psychological First Aid, Kelly excels at bridging the gap between high-level policy and the individual student experience. Kelly provides a steady, approachable presence, prioritizing the creation of transparent, resilient support structures that ensure every student has the tools and accessibility they need to succeed.

Kelly's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I am motivated to apply my professional experience with complex systems to the student environment. Supporting projects for municipal agencies and community organizations taught me to identify where people often get lost in the shuffle of large institutions. I see the university as a similar ecosystem. I am driven to move from navigating these structures to helping refine them, ensuring institutional policies are responsive, accessible, and grounded in the human element so that no student is left to face bureaucratic hurdles alone.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

I am guided by "systemic fairness." My agency work shows that high-level decisions have significant ripple effects on individuals. I prioritize being a steady, reliable presence, making decisions based on evidence and long-term impact. I value transparency and consistency, ensuring processes are predictable and equitable. For me, responsibility means acting as a grounded advocate who uses sound judgment to support the collective well-being of the community, ensuring our systems serve the students they were built for rather than creating more barriers.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

My strength is an analytical perspective used to fix gaps in complex systems. This is backed by professional experience supporting non-profits and delivering safety initiatives for municipal agencies. I bring technical expertise in databases and documentation compliance, alongside training in Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) and Psychological First Aid. This allows me to support regional crisis-response operations and manage high-pressure environments with a grounded approach. I prioritize removing student barriers by intentionally redesigning the systems—from finance to awards—that cause friction, ensuring they are equitable and accessible for every student.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

Responsible use of fees means viewing every resource through a lens of sustainability and impact. My professional background shows that without clear evaluation; resources are easily misallocated. I believe in transparent decision-making that aligns the budget

with the actual, measurable needs of students. Fiscal responsibility isn't just about numbers; it's about ensuring every dollar is an investment in tools and services that genuinely enhance the student experience. I will advocate for a budget that is evidence-based, accountable, and focused on long-term student success.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I stay informed by identifying "common threads" in student challenges. Drawing on my public engagement experience, I look beyond standard feedback to see whose voices are missing. By applying a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens to student concerns, I can better understand the root causes of systemic friction. I believe in proactive observation and creating multiple avenues for connection that reflect our diverse membership. My goal is to ensure my actions accurately reflect and support our broad community by focusing on strategic, inclusive improvements.

Michelina Hamilton 📍 ON



(Running for: Digital Citizenship & Community Councillor; Learning & Success Councillor).

My name is Michelina Hamilton, and I was homeschooled through elementary and high school before starting Athabasca University at 16 years old. I am currently in my third year of studies for a psychology major, and I live in rural southern Ontario.

I have worked at my family's tech business, TestLauncher, which has allowed me to travel across North America and Europe. In April 2025, I was a guest author for Athabasca University's Learners Like No Other feature. My interests include gardening, dog training, and writing fiction.

Athabasca University has lifted many barriers to my education; it enabled me to transition smoothly from homeschooling to undergraduate studies. My goals as a student council member include promoting AU's flexibility structure, improving the academic quality of online courses, and increasing student engagement.

Thank you for considering me as an Athabasca University Student Council member!

Michelina's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I am motivated to serve Athabasca Students on the Council because we are going to prioritize and advocate for the voices of groups that will be affected by change, so you can be heard and empowered. Having been a university student for three years, I understand the most important issues that affect online distance-learning students today: the university's quality of online learning services, community building, and accessibility of higher education to those from varying backgrounds.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

Principles that guide me when taking on responsibilities that affect others include empathy, integrity, and justice. Through empathy, I value others' contributions to promote an inclusive environment. Integrity allows me to be reliable and to act honestly. Justice allows me to respect all individuals without bias and ensure equal opportunities. Guided by my faith, I follow these high moral standards while working with others.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

Strengths that I value and bring to the AUSU Council include strong communication skills, active listening, leadership and teamwork abilities, and creativity. My experience as a university student and working with tutors has also taught me organization and time management. Together with the Council, I can use these qualities to turn our student concerns into new solutions.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

I believe that the responsible use of our student budgets by Athabasca's Council means that money is designated toward supporting school-wide projects that will enrich university students' careers and well-being, such as mental health services, clubs, and media events. If I win this election, I will strive to make sure that fees are approved fairly by students, that they account for our varying economic situations, and are reliably documented and reported to the student and council bodies.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I will ensure that I stay up to date on the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership by attending regular online meetings, considering the direct feedback from student surveys, and listening to opinions gathered through student engagement. I understand the various perspectives of the student body, such as those beginning university or returning to school, and this allows me to carry out the responsibilities to affect real change for every student, regardless of background. I believe Athabasca University's strength is that it is a community of different voices.



(Running for: Finance & Accountability Councillor; Learning & Success Councillor).

My name is Nimmi Mathew, and I am a Bachelor of Commerce student majoring in Accounting at AU. Before returning to school, I worked in pediatric medical research, but after becoming a mother, I chose to pivot into a new path and pursue accounting.

I began my AU journey as a new mom, and at first, online learning felt incredibly isolating. However, by engaging in Facebook groups, AU forums, and case competitions, I discovered a supportive and rather collaborative student community. I also realized that many valuable AU resources exist but aren't always easy to find. This experience motivates me to serve on AUSU Council and help build a more connected and informed student experience.

I believe I bring financial knowledge, strong communication skills, and the ability to balance multiple responsibilities that would make an excellent advocate for students. I am committed to ensuring students are supported and know how their fees are being spent.

Outside of school, I enjoy hosting book clubs and hiking in the mountains.

Nimmi's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I started my Athabasca journey in 2023 as a new mom, going back to school in my 30s and at first it felt really isolating. However, I made an effort to join Facebook groups, Reddit forums, and case competitions, where I met other students, learned from them, and in a weird way, built parallel student experiences together. Additionally, I discovered Athabasca has incredible accommodations, I just didn't know about them until I started asking. I'd love to help foster that same sense of community and make more students aware of the supports available.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

I believe transparency and accountability would be the two key principles guiding me. To uphold this, I would regularly share clear, written updates on the work I'm doing and provide ongoing reports. I also believe it's essential to consistently gather feedback from students, ensuring their voices are heard and reflected in decisions.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

I believe I bring three key strengths. First, strong financial acumen from my accounting studies and work experience. Second, the ability to balance multiple responsibilities as a parent, student, and full-time employee. Finally, strong communication and teamwork skills, developed both at work and through case competitions representing Athabasca University.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

I believe that if students (including myself) are paying fees, those dollars should be working for them-whether that's through advocacy, scholarships, or resources that improve their AU experience such as peer reviewed course information. Secondly, transparency matters and councillors should submit reports about their duties as well as dollars. Thirdly, it's important to regularly ask students for feedback, so decisions reflect what we truly need and value.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I believe it's important to meet students where they are-online, whether that's through Facebook groups, forums, or direct outreach. At the same time, I'd create an open-door approach by offering a consistent weekly time block where students can connect and chat with AUSU representatives. The goal is to help students feel not just heard but also supported.

Robert Ingram 📍 MB



(Running for: Financial Support & Access Councillor; Learning & Success Councillor).

I'm running for AUSU Council because I love this school! It's given me so much opportunity I never thought I would get, from presenting my paper at conferences and getting it published, to being interviewed for Research Assistant positions. When I was younger, financial barriers pushed me into the workforce instead of university, so studying Computing and IT under AU's flexible model has been life-changing.

I bring experience in governance, accessibility, and community leadership. I serve on the Board of Directors for Inclusion Winnipeg, where I focus on equity,

accountability, and responsible decision-making. I co-founded a Terry Fox fundraiser that raised over \$100,000 in 2024, giving me strong experience in financial stewardship and mobilizing community support. Professionally, I work in corporate tech, helping organizations create fair and accessible systems.

If I'm elected, I can help strengthen the supports that matter most to AU students: academic quality, accessible learning resources, and financial affordability.

Robert's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I'm motivated to serve on Council because I want to help strengthen the supports that matter most to AU students: academic quality, learning resources, and financial accessibility. As someone who once couldn't afford university and had to enter the workforce instead, I understand how life-changing it is when education becomes truly accessible. AU made it possible for me to pursue my Computing and IT degree while working, and I want to help protect that opportunity for others. This university has done so much for me I would love the opportunity to give back.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

Good governance to me means understanding the impact of each choice, seeking input before acting, and making decisions based on evidence, not assumptions. I believe in clear communication, consistent follow-through, and documenting decisions so people understand how and why they were made. If I understand their experiences and needs, I can make choices that are fair and respect the people who live with the outcome.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

I bring a mix of governance, advocacy, and practical problem-solving experience that aligns well with Learning & Success and Financial Support & Access. I serve on the Board of Directors for Inclusion Winnipeg, where I focus on equity, accountability, and responsible decision-making. I also co-founded a Terry Fox fundraiser that raised over \$100,000 in 2024, giving me strong experience in financial stewardship and community mobilization. Professionally, I work in technology and workflow design, which helps me analyze issues clearly and create accessible, student-centred solutions.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

To me, responsible use of student fees means treating them with the same care and scrutiny I expect as a student paying those fees myself. Every dollar represents someone's hard work, so it should be used transparently, with clear priorities and measurable value for students.

Responsible stewardship means funding services that genuinely improve the student experience, avoiding waste, and communicating openly about how decisions are made. I would take that responsibility seriously and make sure fees are directed where they have real, tangible impact.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I'll stay informed by actively seeking out student perspectives rather than waiting for them to come to me. AU students are incredibly diverse, so it's important to use multiple channels: surveys, open forums, social media, and direct conversations with different student groups. I also plan to stay connected through AUSU student services and community organizations that reflect the experiences of marginalized learners. As a working AU student myself, I know how important it is that Council decisions reflect real student realities, not assumptions.

Tanner Werenka 📍 AB



(Running for: Finance & Accountability Councillor; Financial Support & Access Councillor).

I'm a Bachelor of Commerce student majoring in Accounting, and I'm running for AUSU Council because students deserve a representative who understands both the numbers and the people behind them. My experience in public accounting means I know how to ask the right financial questions and challenge assumptions, skills I'll bring directly to Council. Beyond my studies, I have volunteered in my community and understand the importance of listening to and advocating for others.

My goals on Council are straightforward: ensure student fees are spent responsibly, push for full financial transparency, and make sure every student has a voice in the decisions that affect them.

Tanner's Answers to Candidate Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to serve on the AUSU Council?

I am motivated by the chance to bring positive change that directly impacts students' lives.

2. What principles guide you when you take on responsibilities that affect others?

Accountability, transparency and follow-through.

3. What strengths or experiences would you bring to the Council table?

My experience working in accounting enables me to assess budgets accurately, spot inconsistencies, and ask the right financial questions. Combined with hands-on community involvement, I bring both financial discipline and a genuine commitment to the people I serve.

4. What does responsible use of student fees mean to you?

It means spending with the intention of positively impacting students, tracking with precision, and reporting it honestly. Students deserve to know where their money goes.

5. How will you ensure you stay informed about the needs of AUSU's diverse student membership?

I will proactively reach out to a variety of students to ensure all voices are heard and their concerns addressed.

Your vote shapes who serves on Council and the student experience that follows.