

# ARTS WORK EXPERIENCE



## YEAR END REPORT

April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020

[uab.ca/awe](http://uab.ca/awe)



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
FACULTY OF ARTS

## Message from the AWE Working Group

It has been another busy and exciting year for Arts Work Experience (AWE). Our year-over-year growth and student and alumni stories demonstrate AWE's impact both on and off campus. As one of the cornerstones of our Faculty's [Experiential Learning](#) offerings, AWE continues to provide diverse and enriching opportunities that allow students to put their skills and knowledge to work outside of the classroom, as outlined in [Change for Good](#) the Faculty of Arts 2017-2022 Academic Strategic Plan. As AWE continues to grow, we are always working to improve to better serve the needs of our students. Contact AWE Working Group members with feedback or ideas, we would love to hear from you!

AWE Working Group Members 2019-20: Allen Ball - Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning); Kristy Wuetherick - Senior Office Student Programs and Services; Amber Nicholson - Career Development Officer; Laura Kerslake - Work Experience Coordinator; Erinne Ng - AWE Communications and Program Support Intern

## Background

Arts Work Experience (AWE) grew out of the desire by Arts undergraduate students to have an opportunity to gain skills-based professional work experience before graduation. AWE began as a pilot program in 2011. Since then, the program has grown significantly with more students joining the program and securing work terms every year.

AWE provides students with the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge in workplace scenarios and to develop professional experience related to their long-term career goals. The work experience model puts the responsibility on the student to set learning objectives, to provide a valuable contribution to an employer and to reflect on how the experience will impact their long term career management. This process is guided and supported by the Faculty of Arts, AWE staff, the U of A Career Centre, our employer partners and Arts students.

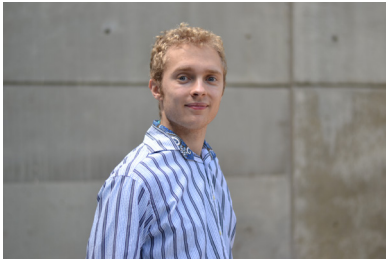
## Vision

Arts Work Experience programs connect students, employers and community as a first step in achieving individual, educational and organizational success. It launches Arts students as they begin a journey of innovation, problem solving and the exploration of engaged citizenship and career opportunities.

## Mission

UAlberta Arts Work Experience programs provide students with a range of meaningful career development and work term opportunities in a supportive environment that builds student confidence in their abilities to achieve academic and career success. It demonstrates the value of an Arts degree, both on and off campus.

## AWE Student Stories



### Löic Cremer (BA Drama)

Video Communications Student - PCL Construction Inc.

"As a result of participating in Arts Work Experience, I've been able to find work relevant to my degree while also broadening my skill set. AWE helped me get experience that I care about. The skills I've learned fit with my career goals, and the connections I've made have proven invaluable."

### Mpoe Mogale (BA Political Science)

Program Assistant - University of Alberta Undergraduate Research Initiative

"Participating in the Arts Work Experience has been one of the highlights of my undergrad journey. AWE offered me more than just another employment opportunity; with access to services that enhance your career development, I now possess the necessary skills for life after graduation."



### Mark Soriano (BA Psychology)

Child Intervention Reporting Intern

Government of Alberta - Alberta Children's Services

"I am so grateful for this opportunity to work with Children's Services. Through AWE, I have developed a deeper understanding of government legislation, policy development, and program evaluation. I've also gained practical experience with data visualization, data analytics, using programming languages in a workplace environment. Thanks to the AWE program, I am absolutely ecstatic to see what the future has in store for me."



### Jocelynn Proulx (BA Criminology)

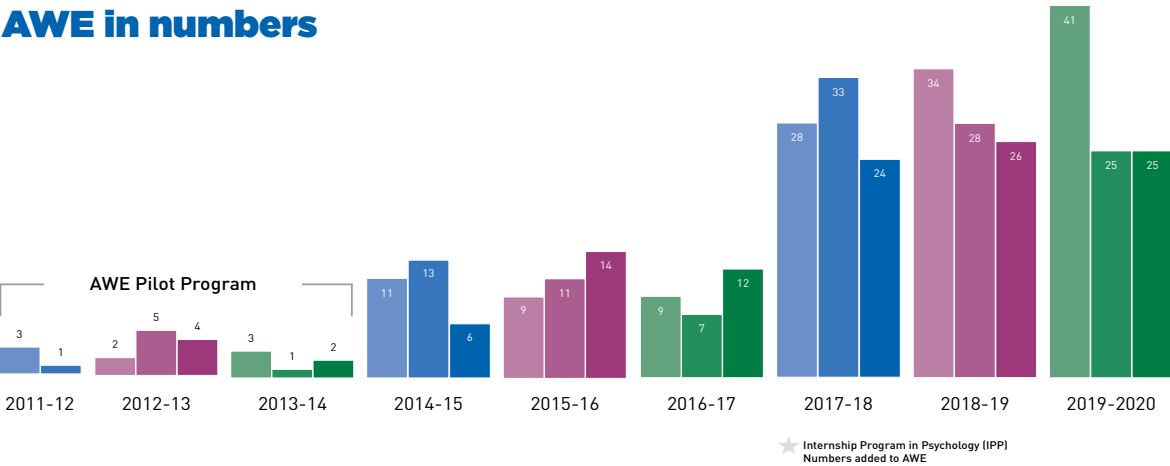
Communications Assistant - Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

Assessment Officer and Consultation Analyst - Gov't of Canada Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency

"Arts Work Experience has really helped me in my academic path. This program allows me to relate what I learn in class to my work positions, and apply the skills that I have gained working to my school work. I am happy to be a part of AWE as it provides meaningful work experience that will prepare me for the future."



# AWE in numbers



## AWE students in 2019 – 2020

WORKED

approximately 50,960 + hours

EARNED

\$1,070,160 with an average wage of \$21 per hour

- 375

AWE jobs posted (70% increase).
- 91

Work terms completed (3% increase). 90% located in Edmonton, 10% outside.  
Fine Arts - 1% , Social Sciences - 94%, Humanities - 4%.
- 189

New students accepted into AWE (45% increase).  
Fine Arts - 6% , Social Sciences - 84%, Humanities - 10%.
- 403

Total students enrolled in AWE (44% increase).  
Fine Arts - 7% , Social Sciences - 80%, Humanities - 13%.
- 315

Students attended AWE Information Sessions (28% increase).

★ For individual Department statistics, please contact AWE staff.

## AWE Alumni Stories

### Crystal Ren ('15 BA, Economics) Associate - Oliver Wyman, Singapore

"As an international student from China, I lacked the necessary network, skill sets, and local labour market knowledge in order to succeed in Canada. Participating in AWE opened my eyes to various industries and professions and enabled me to pivot and reposition my career interests in a short period of time with limited risk. Most importantly, I got to acquire maturity and savviness that were much needed in a competitive business field."



### Duncan McCrostie ('19 BA, Political Science & Economics) Analyst - MNP, Calgary AB

"My two co-op terms gave me a sense of the type of work environment and industry I wanted to work in. Through AWE I developed professional work search skills and I learned how to effectively market myself in resumes and cover letters, and interviews to be competitive. Arts graduates have the ability to be interdisciplinary in the way we approach problems. Our research, writing, critical thinking and analysis skills give us an edge."



### Rowley Zhou ('17 BA, Planning) Planner I - City of Edmonton, Edmonton AB

"Working for the Government of Alberta, was a truly unique opportunity to see the real impacts that planners make in the lives of everyday Albertans. Being part of AWE really provided me with the confidence that I would be better prepared to start a career in planning after graduation. Today as a Planner with the City of Edmonton, I am constantly applying and expanding upon the fundamental skills and abilities that I gained from my work term."

### Rachel Wieringa ('18 BA, English) Certification Program Writer - Government of Alberta, Edmonton AB

"Through AWE it was confirmed to me how valuable an Arts degree is in today's workplace. I didn't realize the skills I had until I had to put them to use in my work experience. The transferable skills I learned from my Arts degree are critical to my job and directly impact the quality of work. AWE doesn't end once you've completed your work experience -- you take every skill and piece of knowledge you've learned throughout. I feel extremely grateful to the university for this opportunity and to the fantastic advisers that helped me get the most out of my work experience."





## Year in Review

AWE continues to grow and to better reflect the diversity of our undergraduate student population. This year, we observed an increase in program interest and participation by Indigenous Students. There was also an increased number of students who secured AWE work terms outside of Edmonton, in locations that included Calgary and Ottawa.

In addition, 2019/20 saw the implementation of a couple of key initiatives. In the fall of 2019, we made content and design improvements to the AWE website and migrated the site to the University's new content management system. We continued to work on the implementation and refinement of our new data management and program application system, campusBRIDGE. This system was launched in collaboration with the Office of the Dean of Students, the U of A [Career Centre](#) and a number of other campus partners. campusBRIDGE has streamlined our application process and allowed for better student data management and data reporting. The ease of posting job opportunities on campusBRIDGE contributed to a 70% increase in the number of positions posted this year.

The AWE Working Group continues to evaluate and refine administration, communications and employer relations strategies based on program growth, accreditation requirements, and student survey recommendations. Selected highlights are included below.

## Administration

- >> Participated in campusBRIDGE Steering Committee (with Arts Career Development Officer as Committee Chair from January 2020) and Data Governance Committee
- >> Prepared and reported program statistics and outcomes to the AWE Working Group, Faculty committees, leadership and communications team
- >> Delivered and evaluated AWE Student and Employer Experience Surveys

## Career Education

- >> Offered new workshops on topics such as LinkedIn and Networking, and delivered first virtual workshop on Best Practices in Interviewing
- >> Continued to offer one-on-one Advising Appointments and Career Coaching sessions

## Diversity and Inclusion

- >> Partnered with Indigenous Student Engagement & Recruitment Specialist and First Peoples' House to host events to encourage Indigenous student participation in AWE
- >> Consulted with and provided statistical information to the Faculty of Arts Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- >> Worked with Accessibility Work Experience Program to better address the needs of self identified students with disabilities

## Communications and Marketing

- >> Increased presence of AWE students on social media, with a particular focus of featuring 27 unique student experience stories on Instagram
- >> Redesigned the AWE website including a new section for employer partners and migrated to University's new content management system
- >> Designed promotional material including a large window banner for the HUB Career Centre

## Employer Relations and Partnerships

- >> Built and maintained relationships with new and existing employer partners through regular information sharing, meetings and inviting them to participate in on-campus recruitment events, e.g. Arts Career Fair
- >> Collaborated and shared best practices with other Co-op and Internship Programs on campus through participating in regular meetings
- >> Participated in the Experiential Learning Working Group and contributed to the Experiential Learning Final Report that led to recommendations for the creation of an Arts +EXP hub

## Looking Ahead - Goals for 2020 - 2021

- >> Transition to new reporting and operating structure as part of +EXP hub
- >> Consult with the Faculty of Arts Committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and others to continue to develop strategies to meet the needs of our diverse student population
- >> Collaborate with the U of A Career Centre to develop online career education and innovative employer outreach strategies in response to COVID-19
- >> Refine and make use of full functionality of campusBRIDGE
- >> Connect with AWE alumni and develop written materials and social media campaign
- >> Continue to grow and develop internal and external communication strategies
- >> Revisit AWE staffing and program expansion plans with AWE Working Group

## On the Cover

Nina Legesse (BA English)

Professional Development Student - PCL Construction Inc.

*"AWE has given me the tools and opportunities to explore what my skills can bring to various industries. I could have never imagined the career options that I see now thanks to my eye-opening work experience term."*

ON THE BACK:

Sabrina Tharani (BA Political Science) & Srosh Hassan (BA Sociology)  
International Relations Interns, University of Alberta International



## HUB CAREER CENTRE

8917 HUB MALL

### **Amber Nicholson**

Career Development Officer  
[amber.nicholson@ualberta.ca](mailto:amber.nicholson@ualberta.ca)  
780-492-6022

### **Laura Kerslake**

Work Experience Coordinator  
[laura.kerslake@ualberta.ca](mailto:laura.kerslake@ualberta.ca)  
780-492-1781

**[uab.ca/awe](http://uab.ca/awe)**



**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**  
FACULTY OF ARTS