



UNIVERSITY
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EAS MONTHLY

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, MURRAY GINGRAS

2026

Welcome back to your studies and work, everyone. I hope you had a restful and enjoyable holiday break. December weather was a bit hit-and-miss, but it was a great month for snow. It made for a perfect excuse to stay indoors, recharge, and enjoy a few favourite movies.

I'm feeling refreshed, and I hope you are too. The start of a new year is always a good moment to look ahead, and for EAS, there are some potentially interesting developments coming up.

We have recently posted an advertisement for an assistant professor position in hydrogeology. Applications will close in mid-February, at which point we'll begin the review process. Whether we're able to make an appointment by July 1st will depend very much on the strength, fit, and career stage of the applicants we attract, as well as their current institutional commitments.

Beyond that search, EAS is also dipping its toes into the Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) pool, and we've expressed interest in the Canada Impact+ program. Although it's difficult to predict outcomes, these initiatives raise the possibility that, over the next year or two, we may see new faces joining the department beyond the hydrogeology position.

Looking ahead to this term, we also have some outreach activities planned. In late January, EAS will have a presence at the BC Roundup, a major geological conference held in British Columbia. On January 26th, we'll be hosting an alumni night at the Roundup, providing an opportunity to reconnect with former students.



One of our goals moving forward is to make these kinds of outreach efforts more routine on the science side of the department, following the lead of Planning, which has very delivered annual engagement activities. Strengthening connections with our alumni brings many benefits, including mentorship opportunities, student support, and longer-term engagement with the department.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, MURRAY GINGRAS CONT'D...

In March, we are also intending to participate in four outreach events organized for Métis communities across Alberta, with planned events in Red Deer, Whitecourt, Fort McMurray, and Grande Prairie. These events are intended to provide information about post-secondary pathways and may draw a good number of prospective students. While participation levels are difficult to predict, they offer an opportunity for EAS to share information about our programs. Our intention is to attend these events and set up a booth, and I will be looking for support from within the department as we consider how best to take part.

All of this points to what looks to be a very interesting and exciting year for EAS. We look forward to these opportunities to promote the department, strengthen our connections, and continue to grow in thoughtful and sustainable ways.

Happy 2026,

- Murray

HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT (HSE) COMMITTEE

Safety and a Pastry

Science Health Safety and Environment Committee in collaboration with Health, Safety and Environment, invites you to attend “Safety and a Pastry,” a drop-in opportunity to discuss safety with HSE representatives. Share your concerns, chat about training, resources and the services we provide or discuss incidents and some lessons we’ve learned as an institution.

When: January 15th 10:00-11:00am

Where: University Commons 4-450

Come with your questions and leave with a donut! [RSVP here](#) for coffee and pastry numbers.



Graduate Student Peer Support Program

The [Graduate Student Peer Support Program \(GSPS\)](#) is a support network available to graduate students as they navigate challenges and opportunities during their time at the UofA.

Any grad student who is seeking advice, guidance and support is encouraged to access the program. 12 graduate students, from a wide variety of backgrounds, with diverse programs of study, languages and nationalities, volunteered and have been trained as peer supporters.

The GSPS program is managed by the [University's Health Safety + Environment](#) team, in partnership with the [Graduate Students' Association](#), the [Office of Student Success and Experience](#), and the [Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#).

Learn more and use this [intake form](#) to indicate your interest in meeting with a peer supporter! Or, if you just have a general question about the program, drop a note to gsps@ualberta.ca and someone will get in touch.

HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT (HSE) COMMITTEE CONT'D...

Science Safety General Orientation

The Science Safety General orientation is available for self-enrolment. New graduate students will be automatically enrolled, check your canvas home page! This orientation is targeted for all employee types, and intended to supplement the onboarding process. Video content includes topics like working alone, building evacuations, how to submit an incident report or a maintenance request, and more! [Enroll here](#).

WELLNESS COMMITTEE

Event Recap

Thank you to the Wellness Committee and all of our amazing staff who helped organize the Children's Holiday Party in December! It was another successful event, and we look forward to holding it again this year.



WELLNESS COMMITTEE CONT'D...

Event Recap

Our end of term Stress Buster event was a hit! Mochee and Bayer visited from the Pet Therapy Society of Northern Alberta, and offered some much needed stress relief to students and staff.



Department Book Swap

We will be holding our first Book Swap at the end of the month. All staff and students are welcome to participate. Bring any books (all genres) that you no longer want, and take home some new ones! Come for coffee/tea and book talk!

When: Friday January 30th (time TBD)

Where: ESB 1-39

WELLNESS COMMITTEE CONT'D...

Affordable Mental Health Resources for Staff

The [Educational Psychology Counselling Centre](#) (Faculty of Education) offers reduced-cost psychological services for individuals, couples, and adults, as well as family therapy and play therapy for children, at \$30 per session.

The [Open Wing Counselling Clinic](#) (St. Stephen's College) is a low-cost, student-run counselling clinic that offers compassionate, professional mental health support in a safe, welcoming environment, at \$45 per session.

[Drop-In YEG](#) offers free 1-hour single-session drop-in therapy, including individual, couples/partner, and family therapy. Their services include referrals to additional services that will support the change.

[Momentum Counselling](#) offers virtual and in-person counselling sessions by appointment only. They specialise in providing solution-focused therapy to those who need affordable, convenient mental counselling. The cost of counselling is determined by their sliding fee scale, which ranges from \$8 to \$200 per session based on the client's total monthly household income.

[Cornerstone Counselling](#) offers a range of counselling, including online, individual, couple, and family counselling. They have a sliding scale fee structure.



Lunchtime Yoga Update

Due to the Rock-athon event being held in ESB 2-18, there will be **no yoga** scheduled on Wednesday January 21st.

Have you met...

[your name here]

Would you like to introduce yourself to the department? Or maybe there is someone you'd like to recommend? Contact Sasha Wilson (sawilson@ualberta.ca) for more information.

'Making Mountains' Speaker Series at EPL

As part of the department's "Making Mountains" partnership with the Edmonton Public Library, award-winning novelist [Thomas Wharton](#) will be giving a talk at Stanley Milner Library, on how the Rocky Mountains have inspired his bestselling books like *Icfields* and *Wolf, Dog, Moon*. This will be the first talk in our "Making Mountains" speaker series, which will run between January and April. Attendance is free and all are welcome, so if you have any questions about fiction writing or have a budding author in your life, please come on down and help get our speaker series launched!

When: January 20th at 7:00pm

Where: Stanley Milner Library



DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Action Required: Outstanding Expense Claims, PCard Transactions, and Cash Advances in Pending Status >240 Day

Outstanding expense claims, including PCard transactions and cash advances that have been in a pending status for more than 240 days, will be automatically deleted in PeopleSoft Financials on January 30, 2026. A “pending” status means that an expense report(s) has been started, but not fully submitted.

To check if you have any pending claims, navigate to [PeopleSoft Financials](#) > Self Service Center > Travel and Expenses > Modify Expense Report. If you have pending claims that still require reimbursement, follow the instructions below:

Update your claim details.

Click ‘Submit Expense Report’.

Check the small flag on the confirmation page before clicking ‘OK’.

If you have submitted your expense correctly, you will see the following confirmation message: ‘*Your expense report has been submitted for approval*’ at the top of the page.

Note: Ensure you have not previously submitted the expense(s) through another report or received reimbursement already. If so, [delete the expense report](#) or wait until it is automatically deleted through this process on **January 30, 2026**.

How Do I Find My ConsignO Cloud Secret Word?

Offer letters initiated through Alfresco Process Services (APS) are distributed for signature via email using ConsignO Cloud, a secure electronic signature platform. ConsignO Cloud enables recipients to sign documents from anywhere using desktops, smartphones and tablets. Signed documents are encrypted and hosted in Canadian data servers for a period of 90 days.

Offer letter signatories will receive two separate emails:

1. An email from Consigno (**University of Alberta** <consignocloud@notarius.com>) containing a link to the **offer letter**.
2. A separate email from our FreshService ticketing systems (UofA Service Portal, servprtl@ualberta.ca) containing the **security password/secret word** required to access the offer letter.

Note: Depending on your email provider (Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo, etc) and security settings, the password

DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION CONT'D...

email may be caught by your Spam/Junk, Promotion, or Archive folders. It is also possible that if you have your Spam/Junk, Promotion, or Archive folders set to automatically delete, they won’t show up in your inbox or other folders. To avoid the messages being sent to your spam folders, please update your security settings to identify these email addresses as safe.

What to do if you didn’t get the password email:

1. Check your Spam, Junk or Promotional Mail folders.
2. Search your entire mailbox (often labeled “All Mail”) for the sender address: consignocloud@notarius.com.

When you locate the password email be sure to mark it as “not spam” and add consignocloud@notarius.com to your safe sender list to avoid issues locating these emails in the future.

If you are unable to locate the password email please call the [Staff Service Centre](#) at 780-492-8000 (option 2) for further assistance.

STUDENT EVENTS, RESOURCES, & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Grad Pantry Updates

There is currently a surplus of bread and baked goods in the Grad Pantry freezer, located in ESB 3-01A. Please feel free to take some home!

Note that the lounge also now has an egg cooker!

And as always, any donations to the Grad Pantry are welcomed and encouraged!



Call for Submissions

If you would like to submit an event or information to be included in next month's issue, please email s.hemrick@ualberta.ca by **January 28, 2026**.



Newsletter Contributors

Editor: Sarah Hemrick

Assistant Editor: Sherry Eklund

Contributors: Rebecca Funk, Marilyn Huff, Murray Gingras, Tara McGee, Anne Myers, Tahya Weiss-Gibbons, Christine Williams, Sasha Wilson, Sarah Woodland, Dean Zaragoza