



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA

EAS MONTHLY

MAR 2026

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The Rhythm of Academe

Spring is coming. After a long winter, when daylight in Edmonton contracts to barely seven and a half hours, we can finally sense the return of the sun. In just a few months, we will move toward June days that stretch to seventeen hours of daylight. A remarkable swing, and it is one that shapes both our routines and our moods. I am never quite sure which season I prefer. There is something deeply restorative about cool winter nights and the profound darkness that makes sleep come easily. Yet summer carries its own energy and promise: evenings in the park, time in the garden, sitting on the deck with a drink as the light finally fades. Each season has its place. Still, by late February, most of us are ready for the change. Winter may bring novelty and a certain beauty, but it is the season I most eagerly anticipate seeing come to its end.

We are already halfway through the winter semester. In just a few weeks, final exams will be upon us. Then, many of our students will head into the field for spring and summer courses, others will begin summer jobs and internships, and the routine of campus life will shift once more. This cadence of scholarly activity, of intense terms followed by new experiences and new directions, is part of what makes academic life so engaging.

I have never been bored in this profession. Not as an undergraduate student, not as a graduate student, and not as a professor. In nearly thirty years, there have been very few mornings (maybe none) when I did not want to get out of bed and come to work. There is something energizing about a scholarly life in which you are constantly learning, constantly questioning, and constantly pressing at the frontiers of (your own) understanding. It is a fantabulous way to spend a life. I remember the moment that presented this for me.

In 1999, while I was still a PhD student, I was on an ichnology field trip examining Jurassic strata near Whitby in England. It was a sunny day along the rocky intertidal coast, with the North Sea tides rolling in and out across those classic exposures. Sitting on the rocks at lunch was one of the senior figures in ichnology at the time, Tony Ekdale. He was approaching retirement; I was just beginning my career. In many ways, I have now come full circle to where he then sat. Tony asked me what I would do when I completed my PhD. I told him that I had the choice between a full time offer with Shell and a Postdoc Position in Turku. The Shell job offered \$80K per year. The postdoc \$44K, and I was leaning towards the money. I had a serious girlfriend- my wife Viv, and I was pretty certain we would be together for a long time. The stability of an industry position suited me well enough.

Tony then presented a story that changed the rest of my life. About ten years into his career, Tony told me, one of his students landed a job in Houston. The student came by his office to say thank you for Tony's support and mentorship. In passing, Tony asked what the starting salary was. It turned out to be literally double what Tony himself was earning as an experienced full professor at the University of Utah.

He said that moment really shook him. He had a family, two kids, very real responsibilities. When you see that kind of salary gap between academia and industry, it is hard not to wonder what you

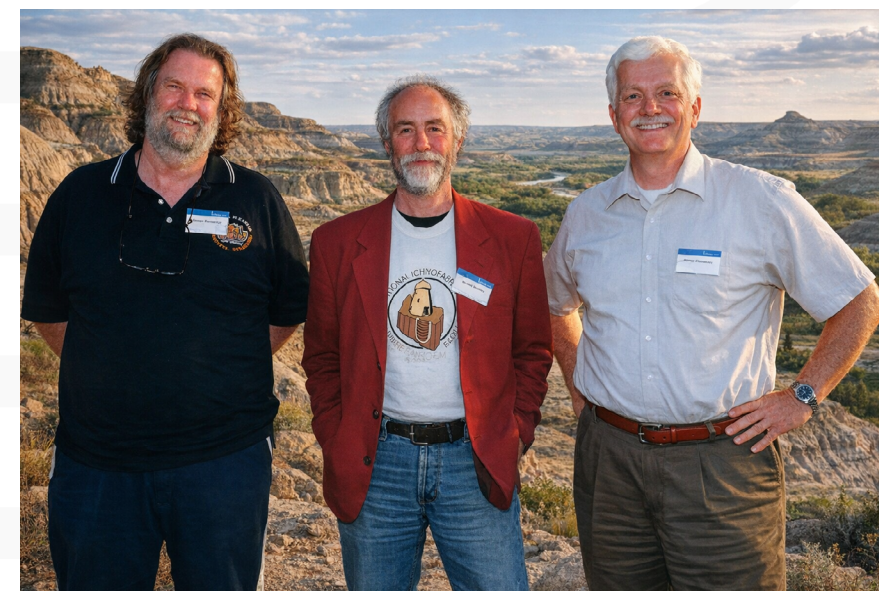
are doing, and why. It can feel difficult to justify staying, especially when you think about what that difference could mean for your family's future.

Tony weathered the uncertainty. He stayed in academia. He kept building his program, publishing, mentoring, collaborating. Over time, he became one of the most recognized figures in ichnology. He was a contemporary of George Pemberton at the University of Alberta, and Richard Bromley was equally prominent; they collaborated extensively. Tony trained a generation of graduate students who went on to make major contributions of their own. His intellectual fingerprints are everywhere in the field.

What struck me most was how he ended the story. He looked me straight in the eye and he said that, in retrospect, he would not change a single thing. His career as a professor had been charmed, fulfilling, and meaningful. The relationships he built were worth more than the salary differential ever could be.

That conversation has echoed for me many times over the years. Academic life may not always be the most lucrative path, but it is rich in other ways: freedom, curiosity, and community. As we begin the final stretch of the Winter 2026 semester, I hope you all enjoy this glide towards spring. Daylight is returning, the term is moving forward, and soon enough we will once again find ourselves in exam halls, on outcrops, in laboratories, and in summer roles.

To our undergraduate students, keep pressing forward in your learning. To our graduate students, whether you are in the field, in the lab, or deep in analysis and writing- your curiosity is the engine of discovery. To our instructors and researchers, thank you for continuing to deliver thoughtful courses and to mentor students while advancing scholarship. And to our support staff, who keep this complex mechanism functioning, often invisibly. Everyone, please know how much your work and efforts matter.



George Pemberton (University of Alberta), Richard Bromley (Copenhagen), and Tony Ekdale (Utah) pictured together against a badlands backdrop. The original photograph was taken in approximately 1993 at an Ichnofabrics workshop. The image shown here has been digitally altered using AI tools; the badlands background was selected deliberately to reflect field areas where all three collaborated extensively, including arid regions of Utah and exposures in Dinosaur Provincial Park and the Horseshoe Canyon Formation near Drumheller, Alberta.

Save THE Date

MARCH 27, 2026 | 4-7PM

EAS END OF YEAR PARTY

2ND YEAR STUDENTS & UP, STAFF, AND FACULTY

Save the Date: EAS End of Year Party

We will be holding the End of Year Party on **March 27th!**
More details to come.

Riddle of the Month

What is black when you buy it, red when you use it, and grey when you throw it away?



[See answer](#)

Upcoming Intermediate First Aid Sessions

Scheduled through the Faculty of Science. In this two-day blended learning course, students will learn to recognize and provide interventions for life-threatening emergencies until medical aid arrives. Topics include: shock and unconsciousness, severe bleeding, head & spinal injuries, major medical conditions, AED training and certification, head and spinal injuries and fractures of the upper and lower limbs. This course includes Level C CPR training and certification (adult, child, infant, and two-rescuer resuscitation) and AED training and certification.

Day 1 is completed asynchronously; budget about 7 hours to complete the online portion prior to the in-person portion.

Day 2 is completed in person. Recertification is available. To qualify for the recertification option you must hold a valid first aid certificate at the time of the Day 2 in person training date.

Cost: \$125.00 + GST

Scheduled dates:

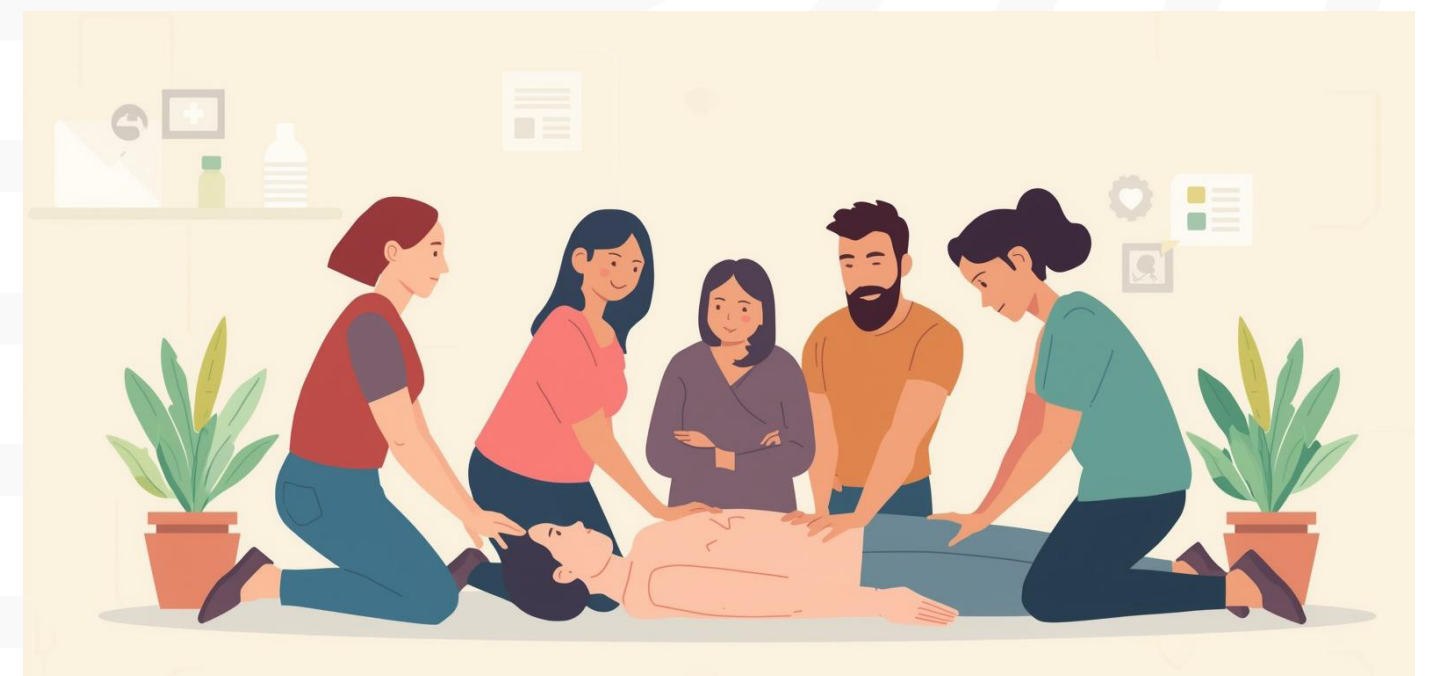
April 13, 2026 (priority reserved for Field school instructors/TAs)

April 20, 2026 (priority reserved for Field school instructors/TAs)

May 13, 2026

May 14, 2026

Pre-register [here](#)



HSE Hazard Alert: Please Read

Recently, a University of Alberta employee sustained injuries after falling from a ladder while at work. Several similar incidents have occurred over the last number of months; two have resulted in serious injury.

The U of A is committed to [A Culture of Care](#), whereby every member of our community owns their safety performance and that of others so that everyone can go home safely each day. This **hazard alert** is one mechanism to prevent similar injuries from occurring, both at the university and at home.

If any of your work involves ladders (including step ladders), please review the following requirements for safe use of a ladder, and share them with your colleagues:

1. Review the [Ladder Safety Guidelines](#), [Ladder Safety Training Bulletin](#) and [Ladder Near Miss Incident Lessons Learned](#).
2. Conduct and document a [hazard assessment](#); note the tasks you will be doing on the ladder, the hazards during use and how you will control them.
3. Ensure that ladders meet CSA or ANSI Ladder Safety Standards. Look for CSA or ANSI stickers on your ladders. Contact hse.info@ualberta.ca if you need assistance.
4. Review the manufacturer specifications and safety instructions and retain them for future reference.
5. If anything feels rushed or improvised, **stop and call it out**. Have a safety discussion to ensure that no one gets hurt.

Report all incidents and near miss events to uab.ca/incident. For more information about working safely with ladders, visit uab.ca/hse. **If you would like additional support to assess the ladders in your area, please complete this [Ladder Assessment Support- Science specific form](#).**

Safety Break

Mark your calendars! The SHSEC Safety Break will be hosted in the Physics Department. Bring your safety related issues to discuss with members of the committee and leave with a safety resource.

When: March 12th, 9:00 - 11:00am

Where: CCIS 4-196

*Please [RSVP here](#) for coffee/tea numbers



Have you met...

[Meg Harlan]

What do you do in the department?

I am an analyst in the Canadian Ice Core Lab, helping to expand the analytical capabilities of the lab for measuring high-resolution ice core chemistry.

What's something your coworkers might not know about you?

Before my master's and PhD, I got a bachelor of arts degree in Dance! (In addition to a BS in Environmental Science). I mostly dance just for fun these days, but I use the creativity and problem-solving skills I gained from my BA all the time.

continued on next page...

What's your favourite distraction?

I love to knit and sew (I make my own clothes!), so you might find me daydreaming about my next project(s).

If you were enrolling in one course, program or degree right now, what would it be?

I would like to enroll in German classes! My partner is German and I'd like to improve my skills in the language.

What's one thing you can't live without?

Tea! I'm not a coffee drinker, but I thrive on multiple cups of black tea (milk, no sugar) a day.

What's something that makes you happy to come to work?

Every day in the Ice Core Lab is different! Some days I'm in the -25°C cold lab, others I'm designing and troubleshooting exciting new analytical equipment, and some I'm processing data at my desk or working on a manuscript.

Do you have any upcoming projects or initiatives you are looking forward to at work?

CICL is in the middle of processing and analyzing the longest ice core ever drilled in the Americas (the Müller Ice Core, drilled on Axel Heiberg Island). As part of a collaboration with the University of Copenhagen, we'll be doing two months of analytical work in Copenhagen at the end of the summer!

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.

Pride Week

UAlberta Pride Week will run from March 9th - 14th. The department will be participating in the parade on March 9th. Join fellow staff, faculty, and students, and show your support for our diverse community. Check out the full list of events [here](#).



Dinosaur Research Institute Fundraising Dinner

The [DRI](#) is preparing to host their first fundraising dinner! Dr. Philip Currie will give the main presentation, "The History of the Growth of Dinosaur Palaeontology in Alberta". In addition, UAlberta PhD and MSc students will present information about their work. A silent auction will accompany dinner, allowing for the opportunity to take home jewellery, art, event packages, and more! \$200/person.

When: March 20, 2026 at 6pm

Where: Winspear Dining Room at the University Club (11435 Saskatchewan Dr)

*Tickets can be requested at info@dinosaurresearch.com



DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Academic and MAPs Staff Child Care Reimbursement

Eligible faculty and staff can now apply for reimbursement of 2025 child care expenses. The deadline to apply is **February 28th**. Review eligibility and instructions on the [Child Care Resources for Faculty and Staff page](#). Reimbursements will be paid on the March 28th pay.

Reminder to Submit 2025 Benefit Claims

Sun Life, the university’s benefits provider, must receive claims for health and dental expenses within 90 days following the end of the calendar year in which the expense was incurred. **Please ensure to submit your 2025 claims for health, vision, and dental benefits so Sun Life receives them by March 31st, 2026**. For more information on how to submit a claim, visit the [Making a Claim web page](#).

GTA/GRA/GRAF Winter Tuition Deductions

The GTA/GRA/GRAF tuition payments for Winter 2026 will commence **February 10th**, and will be applied to the student tuition account in Bear Tracks. The remaining deductions will occur **February 25th, March 10th, March 25th, April 10th and April 25th**. Departments are asked to remit any outstanding Tuition Remission forms for student tuition payments to payroll as soon as possible to ensure students do not incur encumbrances or penalties on their BearTracks financial account.

Fiscal Year End Deadlines

To ensure all financial transactions are captured within the 2025/2026 fiscal year, please adhere to the following submission deadlines. Missing these cut-offs may result in payments being charged to the new fiscal year budget.

****Critical Deadlines****

Category	Submission Deadline	Time
Wire Transfer Requests	Friday, March 13	4:30pm
Non-Employee Reimbursements (CAD/USD)	Wednesday, April 1	4:30pm
Direct Pay & Payment Requests	Thursday, April 2	4:00pm
SupplyNet Invoices (Fully Approved)	Tuesday, April 7	6:00pm
Salary Benefit (SBA) Adjustments	Tuesday, April 7	7:00pm

IMPORTANT NOTE: Many deadlines exist at year end. See [Year End Schedule](#) for a printable copy.

DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION CONT'D...

Year-End Expense Reimbursements

As per the [UAPPOL Expense Reimbursement Procedure](#), any receipt(s) over \$100 CAD should be submitted within 90 days from the date the expense was incurred or by the fiscal year-end, whichever comes first, or the expense will not be reimbursed. The deadline to have expense claims submitted and processed within this fiscal year is **March 16th, 2026**. All receipts should be processed in the fiscal year in which the expense was incurred.

Grants Ending on March 31st

For grants ending on March 31st, submit all travel and expense claims by **March 16th** to ensure charges are processed and posted before the end date. While spending can continue until your project’s end date and claims can be submitted after March 16th, early submission helps minimize the need to reopen closed projects. We cannot guarantee any claims submitted after March 16th will be posted in the current fiscal year.



STUDENT EVENTS, RESOURCES, & ANNOUNCEMENTS

EAS Pride Craft Day

To prepare for the Pride Parade on March 9th (11:30am-1pm), P.S. Warren will be hosting a Pride Craft Day for the EAS department! Come join us next Friday, March 6th in ESB 1-39 from 10:30am - 12pm for some fun posters and great conversations. Just remember to RSVP [here!](#)



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 **March 25, 2026**.



Riddle Answer: Charcoal

RESEARCH FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

University of Alberta: Research Accessibility Support Fund

Description: These funds are not intended as a means of sole research support, but rather as a supplementary resource to address specific accessibility needs and ableism-related barriers faced by D/deaf, disabled and neuro-divergent researchers.

RAS Full Application Deadline: N/A

Sponsor Deadline: February 27th, 2026

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