



UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA

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[Departmental Newsletter]

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, MURRAY GINGRAS

EAS Alumni Gathering at AME Roundup

On January 26, EAS hosted an alumni reception in Vancouver during AME Roundup, the major annual mineral exploration conference on Canada’s west coast. The evening drew about 50 alumni, and the energy in the room made one thing clear: we need to re-establish this as an annual event. Many attendees were graduates from the 2000s and 2010s, and nearly all had passed through our field school program. What made the gathering especially meaningful was the presence of former departmental professor Sarah Gleeson. Sarah and I, often alongside Ben Rostron, John Waldron, JP Zonneveld, or Octavian Catuneanu, taught field school together for many years. Looking around the room, it felt as



Future EAS alumni, and one old alumnus, together at the Roundup alumni mixer. Left to right are Murray (class of 95), Judah, Kathleen, Brynn, Emma, and Kalen (class of 26!)

though we had taught everyone in attendance. It was a pleasure to reconnect with alumni I had not seen in years, including Natasha Oviatt and Neil Fernandez, and to spend time with many others I have grown fond of over the years: Michelle and Rolf Tapper, Stefan and Thomas Poitras, Dustin Rainey, Mike Morris, Aneta Banis, Guillaume Lesage, and many more. It truly was a who’s who of EAS hard-rock alumni now active across Canada’s mineral exploration community.

This event came together at the instigation of Rob Creaser, to whom I am very grateful. Thanks are owed to Dean Zaragosa for helping arrange the venue and support, to Sarah and Melissa for the organizational work that makes events like this possible (and for giving me extra drink tickets), and to Sherry for ensuring my travel logistics ran smoothly. Evenings like this are an awesome reminder of the department’s impact. It is easy to underestimate how far our graduates reach, but this room represented decades of contribution to mineral exploration, energy, environmental stewardship, and critical minerals development across Canada, and beyond. Our alumni are not simply participants in these sectors, they are leaders helping shape responsible and sustainable resource development. EAS has a distinguished history across the geosciences, paleontology, planning, and human geography, and our graduates now contribute in universities, museums, industry, government, and communities around the world. In short, the Vancouver reception was a fun reminder that these legacies are worth sustaining through connecting with our alumni.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE

Valentine’s Bake Swap

We will be holding a lunchtime bake swap on **Friday February 13th**. No baking skills required! Store-bought items welcome.

If you would like to participate, please sign up [here](#).

Valentine's



BAKE SWAP

FRIDAY FEB 13TH
11:30AM – 1:00PM
ESB 1-23



Grad Pantry Update

The grad pantry still has a surplus of bread and baked goods in the freezer. Please feel free to take some items home!



Have
you
met...

[Brian Smerdon]

What do you do in the department?

I'm assisting with groundwater research and student training through three roles: Research Associate, Assistant Lecturer, and Adjunct Professor.

What is your first U of A memory?

I took EAS 425 as an open studies course while I worked as an environmental consultant. It was an evening class, and I remember pausing to appreciate the glassy look of the ESB when I first came to campus. Years later, it's still interesting to see the reflections of trees and blue skies on the front of the building!

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

That I have 50% First Nations ancestry. My mother grew up in N'dakimenan, the lands and waters of the Temagami First Nation in what is now called northern Ontario.

What's your favourite distraction?

Broadly I guess you'd call it puttering around the house, which usually involves building, fixing or creating – in a 'construction' or 'culinary' sense. Recently, this has been bread making, and working with our sourdough starter that's been around for more than a decade.

If you could see any live performance tomorrow, what would it be?

Taylor Swift (maybe not what you were expecting?). My daughter asked about going to see her if/when there's another tour, which I would totally support. I've been fortunate to see lots of concerts, and the large ones (U2, REM, Oasis, Neil Young, even Pink Floyd) can be amazing. So, I would 100% don Swiftie gear and share the love.

What advice would you give your 18-year-old self?

Quality is often more satisfying than quantity. So, walk past the stack of mass-produced beer and try a tasty beverage that's crafted with care. This wouldn't have made any sense to me at 18, but might explain why I live near Happy Beer Street now.

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

Espresso. At home I've got a decent set up to satisfy this craving (Gaggia classic pro), and I grudgingly bought a Nespresso machine for work a couple of years ago. The pile of aluminum pods in my office is reminiscent of the neuroin inhalers scattered around the main character's apartment in the movie Minority Report.

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

Working with students! I'm happy to see undergrads and grads continue to explore geoscience and contribute to global challenges. It's a privilege to join the thesis project journey, share the highs and lows, and learn something cool about the world we live in.

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

I'm excited to start a new project in 2026 with the GSC and Aquanty Inc. (a technology company) that will investigate changes in subsurface water storage through the middle and end of the 21st century. With an incoming MSc student, we're going to work with a massive 3D surface and groundwater model of the Nelson Basin that was created through the Canada-1-Water (C1W) initiative.

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.

Year-end Financial Deadlines

In preparation for the fiscal year-end on March 31st, there are a series of [key cut-off dates](#) that may impact you, and require your action if you need transactions recorded against the current fiscal year ending March 31st, 2026.

Please pay particular attention to the following year-end deadlines:

PURCHASING		
Item	Deadline	Details
Corporate purchasing card (P-Card & Diners) transactions are available to reconcile	March 16-31	March credit card transactions are available to reconcile in MyWallet each day after they are posted to the credit card. Cardholders are reminded to submit online PCard Statement claims prior to March 31.
Accounts Payable Invoices and Payment Request Forms	April 2	4:00PM Deadline for submission of approved electronic invoices and payment request forms to Payment Services. All invoices must be for goods or services delivered on or before March 31 for processing in fiscal 2026.
SupplyNet Invoices	April 7	6:00PM Deadline for online invoices in SupplyNet to be entered, received and approved (invoice status must be 'approved' in the system). All invoices dated March 31 or prior will be processed in fiscal 2026 if entered, received and approved by April 7. All invoices dated April 1 or after will be processed in the next fiscal year – regardless of when entered and approved.
TRAVEL & EXPENSE CLAIMS		
Item	Deadline	Details
Travel Authorization Payment (TAP)	February 24	Airfare bookings made with the University travel agent using a TAP on or before February 24 will be expensed in fiscal 2026. Fees for new tickets or changes to existing tickets made after February 24 will appear in Fiscal 2027.
Travel and Expense Reimbursement Claims (Submission)	March 16	7:30PM Online travel and expense claims must be submitted for approval by this date to be processed in F2026. Claims after this date can be accrued via GLJE request if deemed material to the unit. Refer to Additional Year-end Information section regarding accruals.
Non-Employee Reimbursements	April 1	4:30PM Deadline for submission of non-employee reimbursements payable in CAD or USD to Shared Services - Payment Services (excluding wire payments).

ATLAS EDI Lunch Hour

Instead of having lunch alone (or no lunch at all), this is a chance to take a break from work, socialize, and engage in discussions with other students from the department in a relaxed and welcoming environment!

When: Every two weeks, on Thursdays, from 12:30 - 1:30pm

Where: ESB 3-01A (EAS lunchroom)

*Sweet treats, coffee and tea provided

Discussion topics may include:

- Geopolitical issues (ex. what’s happening in your/a country)
- Marginalized and/or underrepresented groups (ex. BIPOC in geosciences)
- A topic that you are passionate about or feel strongly connected to (ex. wearing socks with sandals at events)

The goal is to give visibility to topics that matter to you! If you have suggestions, please fill out the [google form](#).

These events are intended to be a safe and respectful space for open discussion. Participants will get to choose the topic for the next lunch-hour! The next talk will be, February 12th, we hope to see many of you there!



ATLAS Symposium

The ATLAS Symposium is an annual event that allows students to present their research and learn about ongoing projects within the department. Faculty members, postdoctoral researchers and staff are invited to attend. This year's symposium will take place from April 8th - 10th, 2026. This is a friendly reminder that the 2026 ATLAS Symposium registration for graduate and undergraduate students is now open.

The ATLAS symposium has become a tradition in our department, and you are strongly encouraged to participate. To register, please fill out the [registration form](#) by **February 27th, 2026**. Simultaneously, **we are also opening abstract submission**. Please submit your abstract as a word document to Veronica and Baptiste via email, at vrosa@ualberta.ca and/or bcoutret@ualberta.ca

The abstract must have:

- Concise title;
- Co-authors list and affiliations;
- Font Times New Roman 12, single spaced;
- Maximum 300 words;
- No references.

The deadline for abstract submission is **March 13th, 2026**. If you have any questions or thoughts, please feel free to reach out to Veronica or Baptiste.

Call for abstracts

Open to Undergraduate and Graduate students at all stages!

Rock Climbing Night

Come join ATLAS and P.S Warren for Rock Climbing on **February 11th, from 3-5pm**. No experience necessary!

We will meet at the Wilson Climbing Centre in the Van Vliet Complex. RSVP is required, and can be done [here](#).

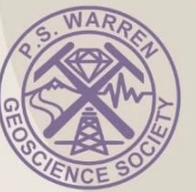
Don't want to climb? You can join afterwards for a post-climb beer at Dewey's, from 5:30pm onward!

P.S. WARREN
GEOSCIENCE SOCIETY
& ATLAS EAS

ROCK CLIMBING

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!








FEB 11TH, 2026

3:00PM - 5:00PM

WILSON CLIMBING CENTRE
VAN VLIET COMPLEX

DON'T WANT TO CLIMB?
JOIN US AT DEWEY'S AFTER!
5:30PM

RSVP REQUIRED!
LINK IN BIO

NOTE: Please be prepared to use a locker, as bags are not permitted in the VVC gym! Free lockers are first come, first serve, and are limited in quantity.

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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 **February 25, 2026**.



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