

LoyfaIRE

MAGAZINE

Winter 2025 • Issue 90



Faculty in Focus

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Student Trailblazers

Jacqueline Cowling
Vivika Sharma

ASoB Club Feature

JDC West
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Proprietary Software Cooperatives
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What Kind of Leader Are You?
Leaving Home to Find Home

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Upcoming Dates

09/04

11/04

18/04

21/04

05/05

08/05

19/06

Last day of Winter Term classes

Exceptions may apply; students must consult with their Faculty office.

Winter Term examinations

April 11 – April 26

Good Friday

University buildings closed.

Easter Monday

University buildings closed.

Spring term classes begin

Spring term payment deadline

Business faculty convocation

Foreword from the Executive Director

Hi everyone, it is my privilege to introduce this semester's edition of Lazy Faire Magazine, and reflect on an incredible journey. My name is Gaurav, and serving as President of Lazy Faire this year has been one of my most rewarding university experiences. As this is the last publication under my presidency, I find myself filled with immense gratitude, not just for the opportunity to lead but for the extraordinary growth I've witnessed within our team.

Our theme this term, **Leadership & Growth**, resonates deeply with me. Leadership is not just about guiding others—it's about evolving, adapting, and learning together. When I first arrived in Canada as an international student in 2022, I faced uncertainty, but I also found opportunities to step up, challenge myself, and embrace new responsibilities. Growth, I've learned, isn't always comfortable; it happens in the moments when we doubt ourselves but decide to push forward anyway, and in the times we support each other, through both obstacles and achievements.

Watching the Lazy Faire team embody these values has been truly inspiring. Each member has demonstrated resilience, creativity, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. This magazine is not just a collection of articles; it is a testament to the dedication and hard work of a team that has continuously challenged itself to think bigger and do better. I am incredibly proud of what we have built together, and I have no doubt that every member of this team will carry these lessons into their careers and beyond.

As you read this edition, I encourage you to reflect on

your own leadership journey. Leadership isn't about titles—it's about taking initiative, lifting others up, and constantly striving to grow. No matter where life takes you, I hope you continue to embrace challenges, lead with integrity, and never stop learning.

With deep gratitude and best wishes,
Gaurav Dhir



President, Lazy Faire Magazine

GAURAV
our president **DHIR**



Note from the Editor-in-Chief

Hello! Welcome to the Winter 2025 issue of Lazy Faire Magazine! If you're a new reader, my name is Zoë, and I'm the Editor-in-Chief this year. Writing this Editor's Note feels very bittersweet, because while it marks the end of my journey with Lazy Faire and ASoB, I'm proud of the work I've been able to accomplish with the team, and I'm grateful for the connections and experiences I've gained.

The themes we selected for this issue, **Leadership** and **Growth**, resonate closely with me as a leader and a soon-to-be graduate. If you told me in my first year that I would be guiding a team of writers and editors to create a magazine for the business student body, I would've either laughed or curled up into a ball on the floor. That year, I remember visiting Lazy Faire's booth at the Club Fair out of curiosity, but something held me back from applying. The funny thing is that now, I can't even begin to recall what stopped me. Obviously, I ended up joining the team later as an editor, and the same hesitancy didn't get in my way again when I eventually decided to take the leap and apply for EiC. That doesn't mean I didn't have doubts; I questioned my ability to lead a team, offer the right kind of guidance and support, or be responsible for others without neglecting my own personal responsibilities. As one of our interviewees, Dr. Noah Castelo, advised however, "[worry] more about the process than the outcome." I plan on taking that advice forward.

The articles in this issue illustrate the different ways leadership and growth can manifest in individuals and organizations. We've interviewed accomplished student leaders to demonstrate what it means to embody leadership and hopefully inspire others to follow in their steps. With respect to organizations, we've sought to understand new approaches to leadership, as well as new technologies driving business growth, in order to envision the future business landscape. At an individual level, we've aimed to spur personal growth and reinforce the idea that you can be a leader in your own life by taking accountability and setting your own direction. If you've never considered yourself to be a leader, our "What Kind of Leader Are You?" quiz might change your perspective (I got mostly C's—you can find out for yourself what that means!).



As you can imagine, our broad interpretations of leadership and growth imply that there is no single ideal leader, nor is there one definitive approach to growth. Whatever stage you're at in your journey, whether you see yourself as a leader or not, and regardless of whether you embrace growth or fear it, I think you'll find something that resonates. Thank you for reading—I hope you enjoy the issue!

All the best,
Zoë Kemppi

A handwritten signature of Zoë Kemppi's name, "Zoë Kemppi", in a cursive script.

Editor-in-Chief, Lazy Faire Magazine

Note from the Creative Director

In line with our theme of **Leadership and Growth**, I've had the privilege of watching our Creative team double in size this semester—an exciting challenge that pushed me as a leader in ways I never expected. Seeing each of my designers flourish has been one of the most inspiring parts of this journey, and I hope this issue inspires you to embrace your own leadership path, whatever it may look like.



Hello, and welcome to our milestone issue! If you're new here, I'm Shanessa (though most of you know me as Nessa) and I've had the privilege of serving as this year's Creative Director. This issue is especially meaningful to me, not just because it marks Lazy Faire's 90th edition, but because it's also my last edition as I get ready to graduate and close this chapter. After three years with the magazine, I'm filled with nostalgia and gratitude for our exceptional team. Their drive, creativity and passion bring each issue to life, and the connection this club has given me to the ASoB community as a whole has been invaluable. Growing with Lazy Faire has been an unforgettable journey, and I couldn't be prouder of what we've built together.

This issue, crafted by an exceptionally talented team of new and returning designers, represents everything Lazy Faire stands for: individuality, autonomy, and innovative free-thinking. Revitalized by Kyle Bigoray in 2023, our visual identity has become a reflection of our bold ideas and fresh perspectives. Being able to shape this vision and bring it to life has been a truly challenging, exciting and rewarding experience.

So whether you're flipping through these pages for inspiration and insight, or just to spot your friends (we get it), I hope this issue broadens your perspective and helps shape you into the kind of leader you aspire to be.

Stay inspired,
Shanessa Fernandes

A handwritten signature of Shanessa Fernandes' name, "Shanessa Fernandes", in a cursive script.

Creative Director, Lazy Faire Magazine

Student Trailblazers

Jacqueline Cowling

Written By: Camryn Jackson

Designed By: Hafsah Mohumed



As president of the Business Students' Association, Jacqueline Cowling is no stranger to leadership. But, beyond the title, Jacqueline is also a passionate advocate for students, a hockey player, an Argonauts fan, and a great friend of mine. Originally from Toronto, Jacqueline moved across the country by herself to discover what the University of Alberta had to offer—by now, growth is probably her middle name. Not only does she oversee one of the largest student organizations on campus, she also balances the chaos of academics and extracurricular involvement with her responsibilities as a student athlete for the competitive Junior women's hockey team, the Edmonton Wolves. With her extensive experience, I knew she'd have some fun stories, great insights, and maybe even a few leadership secrets to spill.

Tell me a little bit about yourself. Looking back to your first year, is this where you imagined you'd be?

I'm a third-year Business Economics and Law major with a minor in psychology. I grew up in Toronto, but I moved to Edmonton for school to meet new people, and see what the U of A had to offer. In my first year, I joined the BSA as a seminar representative. That experience introduced me to the broader BSA community, and the opportunities I found along the way led me to be here today. I talked to Scott (the 2022-2023 BSA president), who encouraged me to apply for VP Academic, which was my previous role. I became inspired by the advocacy opportunities and wanted to take it further! Outside of school, I play hockey with the Edmonton Wolves. It's a great community of inspiring women that I'm lucky to be a part of!

Was there a defining moment when you knew you wanted to take on a bigger role in the BSA?

In Fall 2023, I attended the National Business School Conference organized by the Canadian Association of Business Schools in Winnipeg with former BSA president, Paige Boyer. There, we learned more about other Business Students' Associations across the country and met with their executives to discuss student advocacy issues. Hearing [their] perspectives and unique approaches to addressing student concerns helped me realize how passionate I was about making a difference. That's when I seriously considered running for president!

How has your experience with the BSA challenged you in a way that your classroom experience couldn't?

There are important technical skills that you learn in the classroom, and group projects definitely give you a taste for dealing with people, but in the club space, that collaborative aspect is really emphasized. I was challenged to navigate different interactions, alter my communication styles, and bridge any gaps in knowledge to manage a diverse team towards a common goal. No class teaches people skills better than clubs do!

Could you share your favourite BSA memory?

We attended the National Business School Conference in Winnipeg. It's an opportunity to learn and share with other BSAs from across the country. It was such an informative experience and helped guide some new initiatives and processes that we implemented this year. One highlight from the trip was playing an intense beach soccer match against Laurier [University]. It started off quite lighthearted, but, as the game progressed, both sides were giving it 110%. I think it probably would have been helpful to have some impartial refs!

What challenges have you faced because of your position, and how have you overcome them?

Adaptability is key. Managing multiple events on the BSA club calendar—where all clubs put in their timeline for events—requires a lot of patience and flexibility, because things change all the time. My own calendar is the same—something is always happening! Prioritizing both academics and personal well-being for me is crucial—at the end of the day, we're students first. Being heavily involved is important, but so are our classes and mental health. Taking breaks and keeping balance helps me handle challenges with a fresh perspective.

What's one leadership myth you used to believe, but don't anymore?

[A common myth is that] you have to be outgoing and extroverted all the time. Growing up, it didn't come naturally to me, which sometimes made it challenging when talking to people. Now, I've learned I don't need to put on a show and be extroverted all the time. Once you find a community where you feel supported, you can be yourself and reciprocate that support.

Who are the leaders you look up to, and why?

My grandmother completed her bachelor of commerce here at the U of A and was very involved in student politics. Back then, the BSA was called the Commerce Students' Society, which had a policy prohibiting women from being president of the club. She found that outrageous, so she ran for vice president instead, and won! As a result, she was able to help change the policy and leave a lasting impact on student politics at ASoB. Her determination paved the way for other leaders, which is why I'm honoured to be on the BSA and follow in her footsteps.

What legacy do you want to leave behind with the BSA and at the ASoB?

Right now, I'm focused on continuing the relationships we built this year with the school, including the Students' Union, and other student-run organizations, such as the Engineering Student Society, ICE, and Oasis. I want to set the team up for success—not just the new executives, but also the association itself for years to come.

Rapid Fire Questions

What's your favourite hype song before a big event?

Anything AC/DC.

What's a fun fact about you that would surprise even your closest friends?

I spent 6 months in Ecuador!

Leafs or Oilers?

No comment...

Best excuse for skipping class (if any)?

Beergardens—it's only syllabus week, anyways!

What's one goal you're determined to cross off your bucket list before you graduate?

Go to Copenhagen for a semester abroad!

Responses have been edited for clarity and concision.

Connect with Jacqueline:
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Faculty In Focus

Dr. Noah Castelo



Written by:
Natasha Baig
Designed by:
Alice Gong

"Worry more about the process than the outcome."

Lazy Faire recently met with Noah Castelo, an assistant professor at the Alberta School of Business, to discuss the risks and rewards involved with pursuing academia in business, as students venture further into their chosen career paths.

Please tell me a little bit about yourself and your research in the Alberta School of Business.

I'm a soon-to-be associate professor at the University of Alberta, having received tenure this past fall. I study marketing and teach a class called Consumer Behavior. Most of my research focuses on what I call the "psychology of technology." I look at how consumers interact with technologies such as smartphones or artificial intelligence and how those interactions affect the user, as well as how consumers perceive companies that use different technologies in different ways.

What influenced your decision to pursue academia after obtaining an undergraduate degree? What interested you about consumerism and technology specifically?

I actually did my undergrad in psychology, but I wanted to do something more applicable to the real world. Someone mentioned that you can do a PhD at a business school, specifically in marketing, and that's similar to applied psychology. That career path seemed to combine my interests really well, so I applied to several PhD programs and fell in love with the process of doing research. In terms of what interested me about these topics, it was a fairly natural process; when I was in my first year of a PhD program, I had just been reading some books about artificial intelligence and the topic seemed to be becoming increasingly important. I thought it would be worthwhile to specialize in studying AI, but from a consumer psychology perspective.

What were some of the challenges that you faced when pursuing this career? How did you overcome them?

One of the biggest challenges as a professor is facing a lot of rejection. When you submit papers to peer-reviewed journals to have them published, you are often rejected from multiple journals before finally getting accepted. That can be really demoralizing. You spend months, or even years, working on these projects. You pour a lot of energy, thought, and care into them. However, the reviewers or editors might not see the value in them. You have to have quite a thick skin and be persistent through all that rejection. That's one of the hardest parts.

What other areas of research could Business students pursue?

The big ones are marketing, finance, and accounting, [as well as] management which includes organizational behavior and negotiation. You can study other fields, but those are the main ones. Whatever interests you though, you can find a way to study it in the business school's PhD program.

Why should students consider entering post-graduate studies? Are there reasons why they should not?

It's definitely something that students should consider more. It combines many interesting features to make an attractive package. For example, students have a lot of freedom and autonomy to study whatever interests them. In other careers, your projects are determined by what is profitable for the company, or what your boss thinks is important. In academia, you are your own boss! You also have a guaranteed job for life after you achieve tenure. It's much better than doing a PhD in other fields where the job market is much more competitive and the salaries tend to be lower. Business schools are unique in that students can do a PhD and still have solid job prospects in professorships afterwards. People should be warned about location: it's not always possible to get a job in the exact place that you want. You probably apply to anywhere from 30 to one hundred openings for a professorship. Most people will only get one or two offers. The location of your first job will probably not be your preferred choice. Of course, it is possible to finish a PhD and get a job in the private sector or with the government. That can give you a little bit more flexibility in terms of where you end up working.

What misconceptions might students have about master's and PhD programs?

Most people do not know that you can go straight into a PhD program after undergraduate studies. You don't actually need to do a master's degree first! Most PhD programs at business schools in North America are di-

rect-entry from undergrad. They also pay you to study for the whole five years. The stipends that PhD students receive typically range from \$30,000 to about \$50,000 per year, depending on the school. You can get more scholarships from the Government of Canada and other sources which boost your income even further. Because the master's program is built into the five-year PhD program, you get paid to do both. That's one of the big things that people don't realize.

Throughout your career, you have received over 1.7 million dollars in research funding, been invited to talk at universities, and chaired at conference sessions. What advice would you give to students hoping to achieve similar accomplishments? How can they become similar leaders in their fields?

It's a long-term process. Students should start [by] focusing on short-term goals, such as thinking about a PhD program, identifying research topics, or writing the best paper. These smaller steps will pave the way to those [larger] accomplishments later on. Worry more about the process than the outcome. Make sure that you are acting with care and attention to detail. Pursue ideas that interest you, rather than topics that you think other people care about. The outcomes will take care of themselves eventually. A good piece of advice is to avoid worrying too much about the ultimate goal—just focus on enjoying the process and doing your best.

Responses have been edited for clarity and concision.

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JDC WEST

Written By: Nitasha Baig
Designed By: Kiara D Mello

"Participating in the competition allows students to develop their skills outside of the safe and comfortable environment of the classroom."

Jeux De Commerce West (JDC West), the largest case competition in Western Canada, aims to foster the personal and professional growth of undergraduate students in business. Each year, 12 universities bring over 650 students together to contend in various competitions designed to develop and showcase their skills.¹ The winning school is awarded the title of "School of the Year," setting an example for student prowess among Western provinces. I spoke with Evan Dallaire, one of the club's co-captains, about becoming involved with JDC West and its benefits to emerging student leaders.

In February and March, the University of Alberta division recruits 50 different students to represent the Alberta School of Business in the competition for the upcoming year.

There are four main categories in which students participate: Academic, Athletic, Parliamentary Debate, and Challenge. The majority of delegates compete in the academic section which consists of events in accounting, marketing, and other primary business fields. Additionally, the club hosts several social events throughout the year which allows students to expand their network by 50 new people during each competition season.

To prepare for the academic events, JDC West offers training and mentorship opportunities with experienced professionals in various fields. Not only do these exercises prepare competitors for academic sections, but they also promote networking. However, the crux of JDC West lies in building student confidence and self-improvement. In Evan's experience, entering an unfamiliar competition seemed terrifying at first. Regardless, stepping out of his comfort zone allowed him to become more self-assured and involved with the business community.

Of course, the effects of this competition on personal growth are not just anecdotal. In 1908, psychologists Robert M. Yerkes and John Dillingham Dodson developed the "Yerkes-Dodson law" which states that stress improves performance up to a certain point.² JDC West is a good example—participating in the competition allows students to develop their skills outside of the safe and comfortable environment of the classroom. By challenging themselves, members discover their capacity to solve complex problems and develop public speaking skills in time-sensitive conditions. As a result, participants become more confident in their abilities. This boost in self-esteem is essential to becoming business leaders as it encourages productivity and motivation in the workplace.³

Recruitment for JDC West 2026 begins in February and March 2025. While applications are competitive, most students start at the same place with little experience in these competitions. In fact, first and second year students are typically placed in the development teams where they undergo a team and development program. Evan's advice for prospective students is to come with a positive attitude!

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Written by Nitasha Baig
Designed by Ayomide Popoola

Student Trailblazers

Meet Vivika Sharma

Lazy Faire sat down with Vivika Sharma, an undergraduate student pursuing a bilingual bachelor of commerce degree, to discuss her experiences as a student leader at the Alberta School of Business, including her extensive community involvement and executive positions in several on-campus organizations.

Please tell us a little bit about yourself.

I'm in the fourth year of my degree in marketing. As part of my 12-month co-op work term, I'm working as the Program and Communication Support Intern at the Careers and Work-Integrated Learning Office at the Alberta School of Business. I'm also the VP Marketing for the Cooperative Education Students Association, a club that helps students enhance skills for their careers. Lastly, I am the team captain of the Fitoor Dance Crew which is a Bollywood-fusion dance team at the U of A.

As you just mentioned, you're participating in a co-op, and are involved with multiple clubs on campus. What motivates you to take initiative in interacting with these groups? How do you step out of your comfort zone?

My main motivation is definitely meeting new people, creating connections, and giving back to the community. I remember being a bit timid in my first two years and not knowing the next steps to get more involved in ASoB. I would always see my peers who were super involved on campus and wonder how they managed it all. In my third year, I decided to put myself out there, specifically in the Business community. To get out of your comfort zone, you need to push yourself. The university experience can be so incredible when you get involved and represent the U of A, whatever that means for you. There's a place

for everyone on campus. For me, it was important to find clubs that fell within my [interests]. In my first year, I jumped into dance because it's my favorite thing outside of marketing. That's how my involvement on campus began, which helped me develop skills to support my involvement at ASoB later.

How has your community and academic involvement affected your personal growth? Compared to your first year as a university student, how have you changed?

Being involved has played a big part in growing my confidence. Like I said, I felt lost in my first two years and didn't participate much within the business faculty. I always had the drive to get more involved, but I didn't know where to start and was nervous about whether I would fit into those spaces or not. Aside from [becoming] more confident, I had to develop other soft skills such



as communication, teamwork, social intelligence, and management. After learning to balance academics and extracurriculars, I became a more organized and efficient person. Those soft skills were some of the most valuable things to come from my experiences.

Throughout your academic career, what roadblocks have you encountered? How did you overcome them and what effect did they have on you moving forward?

Being a student who splits their time between Campus St. Jean and the North Campus, it was hard to figure out where to channel my extracurricular effort. I'm part of these two incredible communities on campus—how do I manage being part of both of them? I had to decide what I was interested in and what aligned with my future. Balancing my academics was also something that I struggled with in my first two years of [university]. A lot of that came from being so heavily involved in my clubs. There was definitely a learning curve, especially for the classes that I was less interested in. I found it hard to make sure that I was dedicating time towards understanding those courses while being a club executive. There are some academic sacrifices that may happen. For me, it was a matter of evaluating and shifting around my priorities. Although I adore all of my

clubs, my academics are just as important. That was [something] that I often had to remind myself of. My biggest piece of advice would be sitting down with yourself every now and then to ask: *am I happy with my priorities right now? Are they reflecting my goals?*

When you assume a new position or undertake a new project, how do you adapt to new expectations, stressors, and environments?

I always try to understand the culture that I'm going to be working in. When I was starting my internship, I made a big effort to have coffee chats with everyone and get to know the essence of the office, especially the level of collaboration. If you want to [put] your best foot forward, it's important to understand your environment and how to best position yourself while staying true to your values. Another thing for me is that I'm a huge "to-do list" person. With my current internship, I always make sure that I am up-to-date on everything that needs to be done. Also, communication is so important, and I think having realistic expectations is essential. So, the two biggest considerations with adapting are understanding the workplace environment and making sure that there's effective communication.

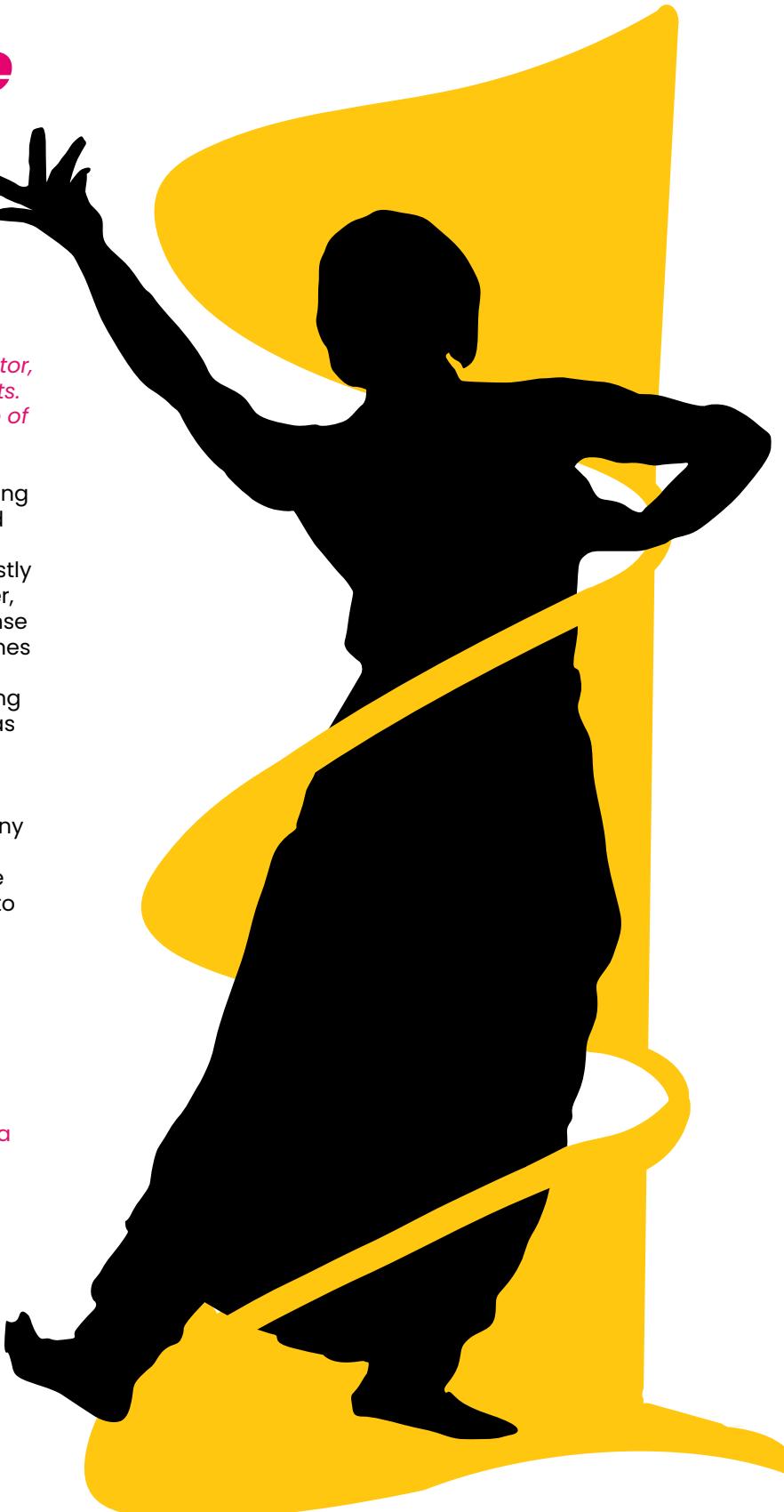
"There's a place for everyone on campus"

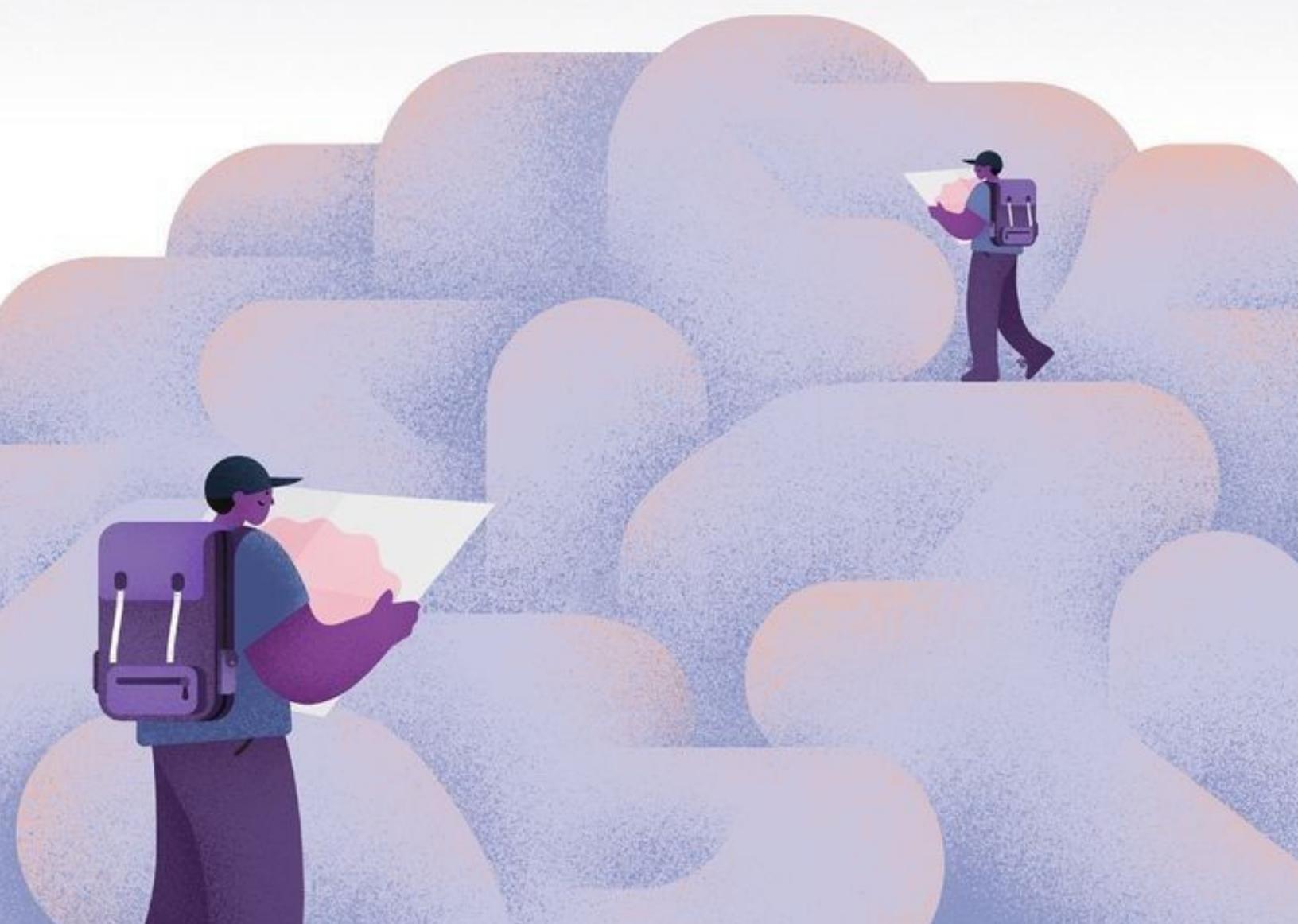
As team captain of a dance crew and a private tutor, you are a role model to your first-year counterparts. How do you encourage the growth and leadership of your younger peers?

It's important that people know their voices are being heard. I've had incredible leaders through jobs and extracurriculars who made sure everyone had a space to share their thoughts and opinions. I honestly think that makes the biggest difference. As a leader, there is so much trust that you can build and a sense of community that you can uphold. That's sometimes overshadowed by a desire to micromanage and handle things in a specific way. When you're working in a team, it's important to realize that everyone has amazing ideas and unique perspectives. Although executive decisions need to be made, your peers shouldn't feel that their ideas are invalid because they are not in positions of power. In university, many first- and second-years need to know that their opinions bring value to the table. So, I always make sure that everyone is included and is given space to contribute.

Responses have been edited for clarity and concision.

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Writers's Choice

Leaving Home to Find Home

Written By: Camryn Jackson
Designed By: Hafsah Mohumed

Life is whatever happens outside your comfort zone.

Someone told me this on the third day of my exchange at Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien, in Vienna, Austria, and I never forgot it for the rest of my semester abroad. On that day, it was not only my 21st birthday, but also my first time celebrating away from all my friends, family, traditions, and language—in other words, my home.

Think about the last time you felt so uncomfortable, all you wanted to do was go home: perhaps at a party where your only friend abandoned you, the first day of a new job where everyone but you knew what to do, or even your first day at a new university, where the campus seemed vast and every face passing by was unfamiliar. Then, think about what happened minutes, hours, or even a day later. You came home from the party with new friends; the job that once felt overwhelming taught you so many new skills you can't keep track of them; and the campus that once felt like a maze began to feel like a second home.

Life is what happens during this small transition period; when a new situation pushes you far beyond your comfort zone, you can choose to cower, or embrace the discomfort to adapt, learn, and grow.

When I first arrived in Vienna, I immediately wanted to book a flight back home. Everything felt wrong—my dorm didn't look like the pictures, my residence was empty and silent, and the city was dark and unwelcoming. I arrived here without knowing anyone and felt completely alone, equipped with a pathetic level of German (I had only completed one Duolingo lesson), and a few suitcases. Now, I can't believe the life I'm living. I live on the same floor as all my new friends; my days are filled with sightseeing, cafe visits, travel, exploring Vienna's nightlife, fumbling my German, and a tiny bit of studying; and I walk around this new city with awe, gratitude, and admiration at its architectural prowess, transit excellence, and endless opportunities. My perspective has shifted, and with it, I've changed too. It's strange how quickly you grow and adapt when there's no other choice.

The biggest lesson I've learned so far as I move from thinking I made the worst decision of my life to the best is that discomfort isn't a signal to retreat; it's a sign that something new and transformative is happening.

Studying abroad is often framed as an academic

learning opportunity, but it's really more of a venture into self-discovery. It's an opportunity to break free from the routine of everyday life, and see what type of person you become when the familiar world is left behind.

It's solely up to you to push through the uncomfortableness and persevere when your comfort zone lies in a different continent. Whether it's struggling to remember yet another new name, awkwardly guessing at what the grocery store clerk is asking, or resisting the urge to Google "how to order coffee in Austria" before stepping inside a café, you have to be the one to push through the awkwardness of being new. What awaits on the other side of these situations is the thrill of self-sufficiency—a newfound confidence in yourself and the realization you are much more capable than you thought.

I won't pretend that everything feels easy yet—it doesn't—but I do know that this feeling of uncertainty won't last forever. I'm proud of myself for making what feels like the biggest jump of my life, and so excited to see where I end up next.

So, if you're feeling out of place, overwhelmed, or alone... we've all been there. What matters is how you move forward, which only takes one step at a time. The best parts of life happen outside your comfort zone.

ASoB Club Feature

Women in Business

Written By: Prerna Sumesh
Designed By: Hafsa Mohamed



Women in Business (WIB) is a student-led organization at the University of Alberta that aims to **empower undergraduate students, especially women, in business and leadership**. The club's three pillars—confidence, community, and empowerment—serve as the club's mission statement as well as guiding principles that students can apply to their personal and professional lives. I spoke with club co-chairs, Abby Corbett and Caris Bonkowski, to discuss the opportunities and firsthand impact that WIB has as a workshop-based interdisciplinary club.

WIB, founded by Rachel Rochat and Remington Irwin during their time as students at the ASoB, is in its fifth year of operation. The club is open to all undergraduate students and currently has forty active members who have contributed more than 1000 volunteer hours within the Edmonton community. **The club hosts mandatory bi-weekly workshops led by executives and professionals**, focusing on personal and professional development. Past workshops have included mock interviews, resume building, corporate panels, and even self-defense. Members can pursue opportunities for professional development, learning about money management, personal branding, financial literacy, salary negotiation, and more.

The club aims to create a safe space for women to go outside of their comfort zone and feel comfortable to try, fail, learn, and grow from their experiences. Through club activities, members form meaningful connections, creating a network of empowered individuals, which fosters a personal sense of belonging that is just as valuable as the professional growth they experience. Together, these opportunities equip members with skills and confidence for success in business and beyond.

WIB is shaping the next generation of women in leadership. Through mentorship, workshops, and hands-on experiences, members build the confidence to step into professional spaces.

WIB prioritizes cultivating an environment where women support and uplift each other, ensuring that leadership is not just an aspiration but a combined community effort. The club continues to focus on developing strong, capable leaders ensuring that its impact extends far beyond the university campus, creating a ripple effect in workplaces where students continue to break barriers and redefine leadership.

Students interested in personal growth, networking, and leadership development are encouraged to join and take advantage of the club's supportive community and various workshops.

Recruitment for the upcoming academic year is open from late March to early April.

Connect with WIB:

Website: www.uofawomeninbusiness.com
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Opportunity or Obstacle?

The Rise of AI in Leadership

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As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to rapidly transform industries and automate business processes,¹ the extent to which AI should be integrated into key decision-making roles has become an increasingly important topic of discussion. With continuous advancements to large language models (LLMs) and machine learning,² AI's influence on business strategy and leadership is expanding, sparking discourse about its potential to complement—or replace—traditional leadership roles. This debate raises a crucial question: should AI take on leadership roles, and if so, to what extent?

AI as an Effective Tool for Growth in Leadership

AI's role in leadership is expanding as organizations continue to recognize its ability to enhance decision-making, optimize operations, and drive innovation. AI systems can also analyze vast amounts of data, and predict trends with much greater accuracy than human leaders. A study from Stanford University's AI Index highlights the substantial increase in AI adoption in organizations, with the proportion of companies adopting AI nearly doubling since 2017, and now stabilizing between 50% and 60%.³ Additionally, businesses implementing AI have reported on average a 30% improvement in operational efficiency, further supporting AI's role in enhancing business performance.⁴

Despite this increase in performance, studies directly testing if AI can replace traditional leadership roles have yet to be conducted, although several indicators suggest that AI is well-positioned to take on leadership responsibilities. This is particularly relevant for roles that require data-driven decision-making, and operational oversight. In finance, AI can analyze market trends 100 times faster than human experts, allowing firms to make more informed investment decisions.⁵ In healthcare, AI-driven models predict patient outcomes with greater precision, helping hospitals allocate resources efficiently. These advancements indicate that AI's leadership

capabilities are not purely theoretical, but could already prove effective in practice.

In addition to this, traditional leadership can often be connected to high costs, and lapses in judgement. Regardless of experience or expertise, traditional leaders are prone to cognitive biases that can impact their decision-making. In contrast, AI, when properly trained, makes decisions solely based on data, thereby lowering emotional and subjective influences that can cloud traditional human decision-making. The Harvard Business Review article "How AI Can Make Us Better Leaders" highlights how AI-driven systems enhance hiring decisions, and identify employee burnout risks through sentiment analysis, leading to improved leadership performance.⁶ Furthermore, businesses that seek to invest in AI leadership solutions can reduce overhead costs typically associated with executive salaries, while improving performance as previously discussed.

AI as an Unsuitable Replacement for Human Capabilities

While AI offers various advantages in leadership, it is not flawless, and lacks the human aspect of leadership. Leadership goes beyond analyzing data and making strategic decisions; it necessitates understanding people, building trust, and managing complex social dynamics in the workplace. Due to the nature of LLMs' constraints with emotional intelligence and social capabilities, the adoption of certain facets of leadership will be a struggle. Additionally, there is the question of accountability: who takes responsibility when AI-driven decision-making goes wrong? AI's limitations raise significant concerns about its suitability for leadership roles, particularly in areas requiring emotional intelligence and human judgement.

The lack of the fundamental aforementioned human qualities presents an overarching barrier to fully incorporating AI in leadership positions. AI simply lacks in areas that require human judgement, intuition, and adaptability.⁷ Due to these limitations, concerns can be raised that while AI may be capable in analytical tasks and data-driven decision-making, it is not fitted to fully take over leadership positions. Simply stated, it's the wrong tool for the job.

This position appears to align with current beliefs as seen from a 2023 KPMG International study, which found that most people prefer AI involvement to be collaborative, and don't trust it to make high-level executive decisions without human oversight.⁸ Furthermore only 1% of all companies investing in AI consider their LLM to be at a mature stage,⁹ indicating reluctance from organizations to fully rely on AI for critical decision-making. These findings suggest that, despite recognizing AI's potential benefits, both individuals and organizations remain hesitant to fully adopt AI into leadership positions.

Further emphasized by AI's inherent limitations, is the lack of accountability behind AI-led decision-making. If a critical business decision is decided by AI, and leads to unintended consequences, there is no clear individual responsible. AI systems can perpetuate biases present in training data, which can ultimately lead to biased decision-making,¹⁰ the very issue AI is expected to improve upon. This lack of responsibility creates uncertainty, as well as legal and ethical risks, further highlighting the need for human oversight.

Is AI-Driven Leadership Inevitable?

Whether you agree or disagree with AI taking on leadership roles, its continued advancement makes it difficult to deny the possibility of its involvement in leadership in the not-so distant future. As a result, it is important to stay informed and be aware of how AI is advancing, its potential impact on industries, and the ethical considerations that come with its increasing role in decision-making. Understanding these developments will be crucial in shaping how AI is integrated into leadership, and ensuring it aligns with human values and organizational goals.



Proprietary Software Cooperatives



Written by: Prerna Sumesh
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Writer's Choice

Innovation Through Shared Ownership

Consider yourself a member of a tiny software startup. You and your group create an innovative tool, but worry about the possibility of losing control to a massive company. But what if there was a middle ground? What if a proprietary software platform was jointly owned by developers, consumers, and corporations so that everyone could profit from its success without giving up control? Proprietary software cooperatives (PSCs) combine shared ownership with collaborative software development, fostering a leadership model where decision-making is distributed among stakeholders. Unlike traditional top-down corporations, PSCs empower developers and users alike, creating a leadership dynamic that values both innovation and organizational sustainability. This model promotes steady, long-term growth, ensuring that success benefits all members, rather than a select few.

At the core of PSCs lies a unique leadership structure that distributes decision-making across tech developers and business strategists: **collaborative leadership**. This model ensures that leadership is not confined within a hierarchical structure but is shared among members, fostering a culture of mutual respect and egalitarianism. Technical developers and business leaders work collaboratively, sharing responsibilities to align technological breakthroughs with business objectives, ensuring that technical sustainability and potential market value are considered.¹ This dynamic framework gives rise to two key perspectives: technical and business leadership. Technical leadership focuses on innovative growth, driving technological advancements and product development to meet evolving user needs. Conversely, business

leadership centers on sustaining growth through financial and market oriented goals, aiming to generate revenue and ensure the cooperative's financial stability.² However, both perspectives are essential for a PSC's success as a balanced sustainable growth model.

Furthermore, this leadership style that situates employees in ownership positions strengthens the business model, prioritizing long-term stability over short-term gains. Employees tend to have a vested interest in the cooperative's future, motivating them to make decisions to ensure lasting success rather than focusing solely on immediate profits, encouraging members to contribute their expertise for the cooperative's sustained growth. In this structure, growth is measured not only in terms of revenue but also in terms of the business's sustainability over time and its level of innovation. With a focus on social sustainability, the cooperative strives for long-term positive outcomes. Innovation, led by a collaborative leadership approach, becomes a critical pillar for retaining a competitive advantage, ensuring that growth is achieved by continuous improvement and adapting to changing market needs rather than simply expanding revenue streams. This strategy creates an environment in which financial success and ethical ideals may coexist, guaranteeing that growth is balanced and forward-thinking.³ This emphasis on long-term and balanced growth is shown by effective collaborative leadership structures in cooperatives like **Hypha Worker Co-op** and **Loomio**. These organizations exemplify the fundamental concepts of PSCs, illustrating how a shared ownership model

and dispersed decision-making can foster innovation and long-term success. For example, at Hypha, decision-making is decentralized, allowing engineers and business leaders to align their goals while remaining committed to sustainability and social impact. Similarly, Loomio relies on its collaborative strategy, which emphasizes transparency and worker independence, to create a collaborative decision-making software that embodies democratic values while attaining market success. Both co-ops demonstrate the possibilities of a leadership system that promotes innovation and ethical ideals while guiding the organization towards sustainability, including growth.^{4,5}

PSCs use equitable profit-sharing methods, distributing earnings to all members (developers, customers, and corporations), which instills a sense of ownership and responsibility. This strategy differs from typical organizations which prioritize earnings of executives and shareholders. Notably, studies show that cooperatives can attain growth rates equivalent to publicly traded enterprises, suggesting that the cooperative model does not necessarily limit growth potential. To sustain operations and expansion, PSCs frequently rely on member contributions, government subsidies, and revenue-based funding, assuring financial stability while adhering to cooperative principles. However, scaling PSCs can be difficult, particularly in attracting traditional investors who are unfamiliar with the cooperative structure. To address these challenges, potential investors must be informed about the model's long-term benefits and stability. This understanding will enhance their confidence, making it easier to secure funding, and scale operations.

The software industry is evolving, and a new paradigm is emerging—one that values innovation, fairness and collaborative success. Rather than focusing solely on profits for shareholders, this business model benefits all stakeholders. It encourages long-term growth by incorporating creativity and financial goals without undermining ethics. It's more than just an option for corporate structuring; it's a smarter, fairer path forward. With sustainability and collaboration at its centre, this approach is redefining business leadership and growth in the technology industry, demonstrating that organizations can thrive without sacrificing success.



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Leading the Way to Financial Freedom

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Empowering Students to Take Control of Their Finances and Future

Addressing the Concern

The student debt crisis is steadily growing in Canada, with students facing extreme difficulties paying for their education. In a new survey from Embark, an education savings and planning company, 77% of students found it hard to afford all expenses, and 60% had to cut certain necessities.¹ Financial pressures, such as living expenses and tuition payments, cause a sharp decline in academic performance and mental health for many students. Thus, there is a growing need to address students' personal finance strategies, allowing them to focus on succeeding academically and building a foundation for the future.

A lack of financial literacy makes matters worse for students in an economy with rising prices. Additionally, academic requirements often lead students to neglect student loan payments until they are overdue. Many students also avoid discussions about finances due to fear or lack of knowledge. Therefore, it is imperative for students, at any stage of their degree, to take action and build a strong financial foundation by creating a budgeting system and focusing on long-term financial growth.

Developing a Sustainable Growth Mindset

For students, the first point of action toward financial management should be financial self-awareness. This involves taking accountability for one's financial situ-

ation and mapping out all information related to money. For many students, this will include fully understanding personal and student loans, calculating monthly expenses, and making room for potential savings. To fulfill these first steps, students can grow their understanding of specific financial terms like cash flow management, debt and credit, and also invest time in learning the psychology of money. No matter how cumbersome it may be, self-evaluation is the key to financial security. By growing awareness and taking ownership of personal finances, tackling financial dilemmas becomes straightforward and achievable.

Student-friendly Budgeting

Since many students do not have a steady income source, creating a flexible budgeting plan is vital for financial security. The 50-30-20 rule is an easy-to-follow framework that covers all expenses while also considering savings.² First, students calculate their monthly income, which typically consists of student loan receivables, lines of credit, and job earnings.

The next step is to divide and differentiate between needs and wants. Typically, fixed expenses will include rent or dorm fees, tuition, and insurance costs, which are needs and should always be given priority over other cash outflows. Wants, on the other hand, will include money spent on other activities for enjoyment and satisfaction, such as dining out, shopping, and entertainment. Students must be able to identify optional

expenditures and moderate them to become financially stronger. Overspending on unnecessary wants can severely damage personal finances and be difficult to recover from.

Once students calculate all their income and expenses, they can apply the 50-30-20 budgeting framework. 50% of all income should be spent on needs, 30% can be spent on wants, and the remaining 20% ought to be saved or invested. The best aspect of this framework is that it requires a part of income to be saved or invested, preventing students from spending everything they make. The system and ratio can be modified according to the student's unique expenses, however the main objective is to minimize discretionary spending, and maximize savings and investments as much as possible.

Long-term Financial Growth

Many students overlook the benefits of starting to invest long-term from a young age. Academics, extracurricular activities, and employment take away from time that can be used to make sound investment decisions. Even in today's fast-paced world, long-term holdings are the best method for unlocking financial growth—the key is to start early.

Getting into the habit of investing monthly through income from part-time work goes a long way. This discipline will build over time and carry on to later parts of students' lives when income increases, allowing them to make more lucrative investments.³ Starting early also involves the lowest risk since these investments have time to recover even if the market temporarily declines. Students can utilize tools like a Tax-Free Savings Account to commence their investing journey, and access mutual funds that focus on growth while avoiding any taxes on capital gains. Student life may seem like an unsuitable time to make investments and plan for retirement, but this stage is the most adequate as it maximizes the lifespan of investments, aiming for thirty to forty years of investment growth in the future.

Overarching Conflict

Understanding personal finance can be simple for students majoring in Finance, but what about other majors at the School of Business? Furthermore, what about students who do not deal with finance topics at all? How can they become financially independent when concepts like investment and budgeting are foreign to them? A lack of sturdy leadership creates confusion and mystery around finances, making it difficult for students to learn about financial literacy. This ambiguity creates tension, and forces individuals to work many

hours, taking away from academics and career-building. While students can take leadership in their own lives and manage their finances, leaders in government, business, and academia ought to acknowledge the systemic nature of this problem and consider broader reforms.

What kind of Leader are you?



1

Your MARK 201 professor just announced your group for the Backpack Simulation project. What's your first step?

- a) Ignore your group members' attempts to locate you in the classroom, and go get Starbucks instead—they don't need you to get started!
- b) Immediately start to delegate tasks among the group—with you being the leader, of course. How else can you ensure everyone actually does their part?
- c) Invite your team members to grab a drink at Dewey's so you can talk about the project plan and get to know your team a little bit better.
- d) Share how you once flipped a backpack on Facebook Marketplace for triple the price, sparking a discussion on real-world sales tactics beyond the project.



2

Your friends convince you to join a dodgeball team for the Campus Cup. To prepare for the tournament, you...

- a) Trust that your team will come up with a hilarious team name and jersey design—they're chronically online anyways, so you should be good.
- b) Set up a bootcamp workshop for your team to drill them about the rules and strategy. If you don't start practicing now, there's no way you'll make Div 1!
- c) Ask what needs to be done—you can recruit more people, set up a hype playlist based on everyone's recommendations, or bring your friends' favourite snacks on game day.
- d) Convince your team to watch Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story. Not only is it hilarious, it will get everyone in the right mindset—it's not about winning, it's about teamwork!



3

At the Golden Bears hockey game, you can most likely be found...

- a) Chilling in the stands, letting your friends choose where to go for the afterparty.
- b) Sending your friends around the rink to gather empty cups—how else will the Beeramid get set up?
- c) Polling your friends on where they think the best seats are. You want everyone to feel included and satisfied with this very important decision!
- d) Hype up the crowd by starting multiple chants, cheering the loudest, and getting everyone to express their U of A pride!

With all this talk about leadership, it's time to find out what your leadership style is! Take our quiz below to find out!

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Designed by: Teya Chung



4

You are about to be attacked by a campus goose. What do you do?

- a) It's not going to attack you, it's just a goose. You'll be fine.
- b) Make eye contact with your friends and tell them to stay calm—then run away! You never know what these evil creatures might be capable of, so it's best to save yourself!
- c) Ask your friend in HR how to best approach the situation—they know all about conflict resolution, right?
- d) Stand your ground and assert your dominance. Your friends will be inspired by your actions and know what to do in future scenarios!



5

Your friends drag you on stage for karaoke night at Dewey's. What are you singing, and how?

- a) You have no idea... you nod your head to the beat in the back, while you watch your friends hit all the notes!
- b) You're singing "Bohemian Rhapsody": you told everyone in your group which harmony to sing ahead of time, with you belting out "Mama....."
- c) After careful consideration and feedback, your group decides to sing "Unwritten"! You all share microphones and make sure each voice can be heard.
- d) You pick "Mr. Brightside", knowing that it will get everyone at Dewey's in the best mood!

If you picked mostly A's:

You are a **Laissez-Faire Leader**!

Your hands-off leadership style inspires your team with accountability and autonomy. Laissez-faire leaders have a laid-back approach and usually don't enforce strict deadlines or policies—instead, they choose the right people for the job, and trust that things will get done on time.

Your real-life example: Warren Buffet

Your fictional character example: John Hammond From Jurassic Park

If you picked mostly B's:

You are an **Autocratic Leader**!

You believe in your own judgment first and foremost, and want control over decisions to ensure projects run smoothly. Autocratic leaders like structure to get things done efficiently and quickly, and leave little room for their team's input. While harshly criticized, this leadership style is effective in some situations—if you don't do it, it's not going to get done!

Your real-life example: Steve Jobs

Your fictional character example: Miranda Priestly from The Devil Wears Prada

If you picked mostly C's:

You are a **Democratic Leader**!

You empower your team by valuing their feedback and input when making decisions. Democratic leaders focus on open communication, collaboration, and fostering a collective environment. It might take a little longer to come to a consensus, but you want to make your team feel heard and happy—if you sacrifice some efficiency, so be it!

Your real-life example: Nelson Mandela

Your fictional character example: Simba from The Lion King

If you picked mostly D's:

You are a **Transformational Leader**!

You look at the bigger picture, inspiring your team to see themselves as part of a shared vision and mission. Transformational leaders elevate their team's individual goals and aspirations for the benefit of the collective and focus on innovation, encouragement, and inspiration.

Your real-life example: Oprah Winfrey

Your fictional character example: Harry Potter from the Harry Potter series

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The background image shows a modern lounge or study area. In the foreground, a man sits on a light-colored sofa, looking at his phone. Behind him, several other people are working on laptops or studying. The room has a warm color palette with wooden walls and a large window in the background.

LAZY FAIR

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