

**Minutes**

- 1) President Luca Vanzella welcomed 15 members of the Friends. He explained that rather than voting with raised hands, objections would be noted.
- 2) Approval of the agenda was moved by Bill Cheung and seconded by Nazir Mulji. CARRIED.
- 3) Approval of the Minutes of the 2024 AGM was moved by Ken Regan and seconded by Allen Snart. CARRIED.
- 4) Nazir Mulji reviewed last year's financial statements. The organization is in a positive financial position, and has received small donations to the Operating Account. Approval of the 2024 year-end financial statements was moved by Nazir Mulji and seconded by Bill Cheung. CARRIED.

Nazir thanked Michael Gibbins and Jean Cooley for their dedication to reviewing the financial statements.

A question was asked about whether it was the intent of Raise-the-Bar to generate revenue. The answer is no, that is not the intent.

Jean Cooley commended Nazir's work as Treasurer. And suggested adding some kind of documentation to prove that the recipient received the gift certificate awarded after the AGM.

- 5) Election of financial reviewers for 2025. Two volunteers were requested and Bill Cheung and Michael Gibbins stepped forward. Many thanks to Bill and Michael.

## 6) Year-end report by Luca Vanzella:

Another successful year for the Friends!

### **Strategic Plan Update**

Last year we presented the **2024 - 2027 Strategic Plan**. The plan outlines a growth agenda featuring increased programming and efforts to enhance awareness and significantly expand membership. The Board was able to make sustained progress on Goal 1: Deliver a Diverse Suite of Engagement Opportunities. The remaining five goals will be reviewed in the coming year.

### **Our Mission**

The Friends of the University of Alberta are a group of individuals bound by a shared belief in the transformative power of education and the vital role of the University of Alberta in shaping a better future. Our mission is to build and nurture a broad community of friends to celebrate and champion the University.

### **Our Programs**

We have three types of programs:

- Helping Students
- Educating People
- Connecting Community

#### **Helping Students**

We have [endowed six scholarships](#) and we [annually fund four scholarships](#).

This past year, The Friends **topped up three of our six endowed scholarships** to increase the award levels.

- Ailsa Heathcote Walker Memorial Prize
- Helen McArthur Scholarship in Nursing Fund
- Isabel Munroe Smith Memorial Scholarship

#### **Educating People**

We help educate people with two speaking programs. Our signature event is the annual [Henry Marshall Tory Lecture](#) - a free public lecture featuring renowned speakers that engage the broader community in front-of-mind topics. [Raise The Bar](#) provides engaging learning opportunities delivered by U of A researchers in a casual setting, like a bar, raising the bar on the way people consume content.

The 2024 Henry Marshall Tory Lecture was presented by **Dr. Jared Wesley**. Dr. Wesley spoke about “**Finding Common Ground in Polarized Times: Rediscovering Alberta’s Political Culture**”. It was a very thought-provoking talk, highlighted by how Albertans draw, describe and name the average Albertan.

We also hosted three stimulating Raise The Bar events at its new location: The Blue Chair.

- Oct 22: Dr. Geoffrey Rockwell  
Who is responsible when you chat with an AI?
- Feb 11: Dr. Andrew Derocher  
Polar Bears: a cultural and climate icon
- Apr 22: Dr. Ted Bishop  
The Social Life of Ink

### **Connecting Community**

We provide funding to University programs that connect the broader community to the University. Two of these programs have the power to fundamentally change lives: [U School](#) introduces students in grades 4 through 9 from socially vulnerable, aboriginal and rural communities to the University. [Humanities 101](#) offers free, non-credit, university-level courses for Albertans who have a passion for learning but whose circumstances have barriers that make post-secondary education inaccessible.

### **Presentations**

Natalie Peter, the U School Program Lead, and Lisa Prins, the Humanities 101 Program Coordinator, made presentations about their programs and the impact that they have on the communities that they serve.

Natalie and Lisa both expressed their gratitude to the Friends for the continued support of their programs.

- 7) Approval of the proposed slate for Board of Directors of the Society moved by Allen Snart and seconded by Bill Cheung. CARRIED.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Luca Vanzella	President
Ken Regan	Vice President
Kate Freeman	Secretary
Nazir Mulji	Treasurer
Renée Elio	Director
Anastasia Lim	Director
Kathryn Vanzella	Director

Luca thanked all of the volunteers and reminded everyone that we are dependent on the revenue received from the casino, so asked for continued volunteer participation with the Friends.

Luca thanked the retiring Board members: Mary Pat Berry, Tristan Cruz, Randa Kachkar, Shari Pisa, William Lau, and Ann-Mary Yanagawa.

- 8) Draw Prize: \$100 gift certificate for a local restaurant of your choice awarded to Tristan Cruz. Congratulations!

9) Upcoming Events

- June 10  
Raise The Bar with Dr. Cressida Heyes  
Sleep is the New Sex
- November 3-4  
Our next casino
- November 5  
Henry Marshall Tory Lecture  
Dr. Greg Anderson  
Professor, Faculty of Arts - Political Science Dept.

- 10) Adjournment at 5:55 pm.