

# Mathematics Council NEWSLETTER

The Alberta Teachers' Association

Volume 35

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June 2017

## From the Editor's Laptop

First, I would like to thank our outgoing editor, Karen Bouwman, for her hard work and dedication to the *Mathematics Council Newsletter* over the past several years. It is sad to say goodbye to a valuable member of our team, but we wish her all the best as she pursues other opportunities.

Second, it is my pleasure to announce that we have found a new newsletter editor. We welcome Stacey Wu to the team and wish her great success in this new endeavour. We are getting her up to speed on the procedures for producing the newsletter, and she will be ready to hit the ground running with the fall issue.

If you want to be more actively involved with the Mathematics Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association (MCATA), please submit an application form to be a director on the MCATA executive (<http://mathteachers.ab.ca/executive-members.html>). Another option is to seek nomination for an elected position, which runs for a two-year term. The elected positions are president, vice-president (publications), vice-president (professional development), treasurer and secretary. The positions up for election are dependent on whether it is an odd or an even year. President, vice-president (publications) and secretary are elected in even years, and treasurer and vice-president (professional development) are elected in odd years. Information about elections comes out each winter and can be found on our website and in the newsletter.

Until next time, I wish you all a lovely end-of-year wrap-up and restful summer holidays.

*Tancy Whitehouse*  
Vice-President, Publications

## Council Update

On April 29, the MCATA executive appointed Alicia Burdess as president, following the resignation of John Scammell.

Alicia is the numeracy lead teacher for the Grande Prairie Catholic School District. She is currently MCATA's director of facilities, and she is excited to take on her new role of president for the remainder of the current term.

MCATA thanks outgoing president John Scammell for his dedication to the council for the past several years. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

## Save the Date! Fall 2017 Symposium

Keep October 19 open for the MCATA Fall Symposium! The topic will be "Break Out from Traditional Math Classes!" Sandi Berg, Alicia Burdess and Dave Martin will show participants how to use a breakout box to engage students in mathematical concepts.

# Notes from the Executive

## Meet the New Editor

**M**ath teaching is a rewarding experience. I have been an educator for 14 years. I have taught high school math in China and have been working as an elementary generalist for the past 10 years in Alberta.

I earned my master's degree in the area of second language teaching seven years ago from the University of Calgary, but math has always been my passion. I have worked with teachers from the Spanish, German and Mandarin bilingual programs in a math cohort for supporting strong math teaching, learning and leading in the target language. I am currently participating in the Galileo Educational Network's math research prototype series, which is focused on teaching and leading to improve mathematical outcomes for elementary students in Alberta.

When I am not teaching, I am most likely hiking or reading. A recent favourite book is *Mathematical Mindsets: Unleashing Students' Potential Through Creative Math, Inspiring Messages and Innovative Teaching*, by Jo Boaler (Jossey-Bass, 2015).

Stacey Wu

## Summary of Executive Meetings

**M**CATA held executive meetings on November 25 and 26, 2016.

A significant agenda item was to debrief the 2016 annual conference held in Canmore. Council members received lots of positive feedback on the conference, which was echoed by the 73 people who completed the online survey.

The newsletter editor, treasurer and secretary attended a seminar to update them about their roles and responsibilities.

Most of the meeting time was spent discussing and planning upcoming events—the 2017 Spring Symposium, the 2017 annual conference (to be held at the River Cree Resort, in Enoch) and the 2018 MCATA and Science Council joint conference (to be held in Edmonton).

## MCATA Fall Conference: “2017: A Prime Year for Mathematics”

**M**CATA is excited about our upcoming fall conference, “2017: A Prime Year for Mathematics,” to be held at the River Cree Resort, in Enoch, on October 20 and 21.

Our keynote speakers will be Michael Pruner, president of the British Columbia Association of Mathematics Teachers and a high school math teacher in North Vancouver with a “thinking classroom,” and Sunil Singh, a math educator who is transforming the way mathematics is revealed and author of the forthcoming book *Pi of Life: The Hidden Happiness of Mathematics* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

Don't forget to join us for the wine and cheese and our annual games night.

Registration is now live at [www.mathteachers.ab.ca](http://www.mathteachers.ab.ca). For updates, follow us on Twitter (@MCATA\_Tweets).

### Call for Proposals

We are now accepting speaker proposals for “2017: A Prime Year for Mathematics.” Come and join the conversation!

Go to [www.mathteachers.ab.ca](http://www.mathteachers.ab.ca) to find the speaker proposal form.

# Provincial Executive Council

## PEC Report

The Provincial Executive Council election is now over. Alberta teachers have elected as ATA president one of our long-serving members on Council. Greg Jeffery will take office on July 1. Outgoing president Mark Ramsankar will be taking on the role of Canadian Teachers' Federation president this summer.

Jenny Regal, from Calgary, has vast experience in local and provincial work, and Jason Schilling, from Lethbridge, has served as the South West district representative for eight years. Both will be excellent vice-presidents.

Because PEC was so disappointed with the voter turnout, I urge all MCATA members to be engaged in the next election. This is your Association, and you can set the direction by exercising your democratic right and responsibility.

I will be retiring after 34 years of teaching in Alberta classrooms. My ATA involvement has included ten years as a district representative, four years as a vice-president, four years as president and four years as past president. I have served as MCATA's PEC liaison for 22 years, which I have enjoyed very much. I am so impressed with the volunteers on the executive, who are committed to excellent math pedagogy, curriculum and appropriate assessment practices. They give hours of time to the council, as well as working full-time and managing their family and community roles.

Thank you to the executive and to all the members of this wonderful specialist council.

*Carol Henderson*

## MCATA Awards and Grants

### MCATA Grants

Grants of up to \$500 are available to teachers who organize PD initiatives that support current teaching or learning practices, as well as priorities for PD outlined by Alberta Education, MCATA, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), the ATA or your local school district. For more information and an application form, go to <http://mathteachers.ab.ca/mcata-grants.html>.

### Dr Arthur Jorgensen Chair Award

The Dr Arthur Jorgensen Chair Award is presented to a third- or fourth-year education student studying in Alberta who promotes mathematics education. For more information and an application form, go to <http://mathteachers.ab.ca/dr-arthur-jorgensen-chair-award.html>. The deadline for applications is **April 30** of each year.

### Alberta Mathematics Educator Awards

Alberta Mathematics Educator Awards will be presented to up to three teachers annually who have made exceptional contributions to mathematics and demonstrated leadership at the school, district, provincial or national level. For more information and a nomination form, go to <http://mathteachers.ab.ca/alberta-mathematics-educator-award.html>. The deadline for nominations is **August 1** of each year.

# Alberta Education Updates

## Systemic Actions on Math

The Alberta government is taking steps to help students achieve better marks in mathematics and to support math teachers in the classroom. Some of these actions were recommended by the Math Curriculum Review Working Group, which is made up of postsecondary and high school instructors. Alberta Education will allocate at least \$2 million toward this goal through its existing budget.

## Math Specialists

Alberta Education is engaging in conversations with the deans of Alberta's faculties of education to explore options to better prepare education students to deliver effective math programming in the classroom, particularly in the elementary grades.

## Professional Development

The Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia (ARPD) provide free professional learning opportunities to preservice and current math teachers through the Elementary Mathematics Professional Learning Opportunities (EMPLO) initiative. For more information, go to <https://arpdc.ab.ca>.

Preservice and current teachers will soon have access to up to \$2,000 to help cover tuition costs for postsecondary courses designed to strengthen their knowledge, skills and confidence in teaching math. The details of the program are being finalized.

During the winter of 2016/17, Alberta Education staff presented to seven postsecondary institutions on the 2016 clarifications to the math program of studies.

## Student Assessment

Starting in 2018, the math diploma exams will once again require students to show their work. In 2010, the previous government removed this portion as a cost-saving measure.

Alberta Education will also introduce a non-calculator portion to the Grade 9 math provincial achievement test.

## Scope-and-Sequence Document

Alberta Education is producing a scope-and-sequence document for the current math curriculum. Groups of teachers are creating this support document, which will highlight the connections between units, topics and grades. This work was initiated in April 2016.

## Future Provincial Curriculum

Alberta Education is partnering with the ATA to develop K–12 provincial programs of study in English and French.

To ensure student success, Alberta's programs of study must be relevant, meaningful and engaging for all students. Previously, the programs of study were developed one subject at a time and over different time periods, so there is no common design among them. To achieve the desired shift, Alberta Education has developed *The Guiding Framework for the Design and Development of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Provincial Curriculum (Programs of Study)*. The document is available at <https://education.alberta.ca/media/3575996/curriculum-development-guiding-framework.pdf>.

The primary role of this guiding framework is to set a common direction for provincial curriculum development, using plain language while preserving the complexity appropriate for professional teachers. The consistent application of this framework is necessary to achieve coherence within and across subjects and grades.

Alberta Education is also developing a powerful digital tool called the Curriculum Development and Management Application (CDMA). The tool will help teachers access and interact with curriculum in ways they have never been able to before and will also support curriculum developers by allowing for a shorter curriculum-development cycle. This means that curriculum can be updated as needed, in shorter time frames, to ensure that it remains current and relevant.

The development of learning outcomes in the six subject areas (K–12) will begin in fall 2017. The cycle of developing learning outcomes and reviewing and validating the draft curriculum elements will continue through December 2022.

The targeted timeline for ministerial approval of curriculum development is as follows:

- Grades K–4—December 2018
- Grades 5–8—December 2019
- Grades 9–10 (three subject areas)—December 2020
- Grades 9–10 (three subject areas) and Grades 11–12 (three subject areas)—December 2021
- Grades 11–12 (three subject areas)—December 2022

Timelines for implementation of the curriculum have yet to be determined.

# 2017 MCATA Elections

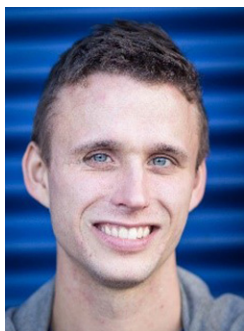
In the spring, a call for nominees for MCATA executive positions went out. The available positions are treasurer and vice-president (professional development), both of which are for a two-year term (beginning after the fall conference).

Rod Lowry, the incumbent vice-president (professional development) will continue in that role after being re-elected by acclamation. Congratulations, Rod!

MCATA is excited to announce that two candidates put their names forward for the position of treasurer. At our annual general meeting on October 20 (during the conference), we will hold a vote to elect a treasurer for the upcoming two-year term.

We encourage all MCATA members to attend the AGM to participate in the vote. To learn more about the candidates, please read their platforms below.

## Meet Your Candidates for Treasurer



### Darcy Bundy

In short, I love hard work. I overload my schedule with late nights, readings, meetings and lesson plans, and I devote what little extra time I have to maintaining a healthy balance between my social life, work life and the master's program in secondary education at the University of Alberta.

I am working, and hope to continue working, at Inner City High School, in Edmonton. The students and the atmosphere inspire me. This role has provided me with a fantastic learning opportunity, which I believe is invaluable to an organization like MCATA.

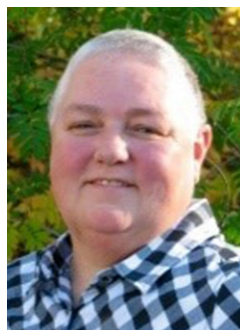
The students at the school succeed because of the hard work and cooperation of the team that surrounds them. We work together, not individually, to create a platform that lifts every student into a place of opportunity, encouragement and support. Our students become critical thinkers, decision makers and participants in a healthy lifestyle, and they always emerge as victors because of the united effort we make as a staff.

Working in settings that push the limits of what I am capable of has driven me to provide my students with the best education I can create for them, lessons

that truly meet students at their level of understanding and an atmosphere that is conducive to the most effective learning.

The teamwork, collaboration and hard work I experience at Inner City High School are what would make me a valuable addition to the team that brings the best mathematics education to students across Alberta. I'm looking forward to working with like-minded people who strive to make a positive impact in the classroom.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to meeting everyone soon.



### Marj Farris

I have been a member of MCATA for over 25 years. My roles with MCATA include being a director at large for one year and the director of facilities (contracting and organizing facilities and meals for events) for three years. I have also served as president for five years and past president for the last three years. For the past eight years, I have

been a member of the conference committee, and I am currently the 2017 conference codirector. I was also a member of the organizing committee for the MCATA and Science Council joint conference in 2015, and I am currently on the committee for the 2018 joint conference.

I recently completed a three-year term as the Canadian representative on the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Affiliate Relations Committee, and I am currently a Canadian Region team leader for the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM).

I was treasurer of the Fort Vermilion Local No 77 of the ATA for more than 20 years and have worked closely with the ATA accounting department at Barnett House.

These experiences have given me a very good understanding of the duties of MCATA treasurer and the skills that person will need.

With school budgets and PD funding being cut across the province, our specialist council (along with others) is struggling to provide the best possible services to our members.

I believe that MCATA needs a treasurer with experience and commitment.



# NCSM Kay Gilliland Equity Lecture Award Winner— Florence Glanfield

The National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM) established the Kay Gilliland Equity Lecture Award to honour its namesake and to recognize those who have made unique and dedicated contributions to equity in mathematics education. The lecture series serves to acknowledge and honour Kay Gilliland's service and to promote the cause of equity in math education.

I was honoured to attend the presentation of this year's lecture award to my mentor, Florence Glanfield, of the University of Alberta. Glanfield's work weaves her own Indigenous background and knowledge with the threads of Indigenous elders, knowledge holders and teachers into the recurring equity issues in math education. Her work gives us a common ground and a window into Indigenous communities and perspectives throughout North America and the world.

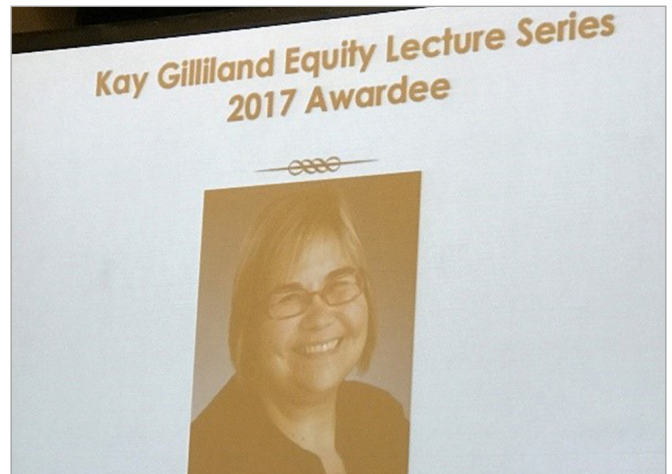
Glanfield's passion for math and equity was evident during her lecture. She invited us to consider how the perspectives of relationships, balance, active participation and deep observation bring commonality into how we approach mathematics, the students we teach and the way we think about equity.

Glanfield is currently chair of and a professor in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. She is also an adjunct professor with the University of Saskatchewan's College of Education and an affiliated faculty member with the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development at the U of A. She earned her PhD from the U of A in 2003, studying math teacher understanding. Her primary areas of research are math teacher education, Aboriginal perspectives and relational research.

The award was presented at the NCSM's annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, on April 4.

Congratulations to Florence Glanfield!

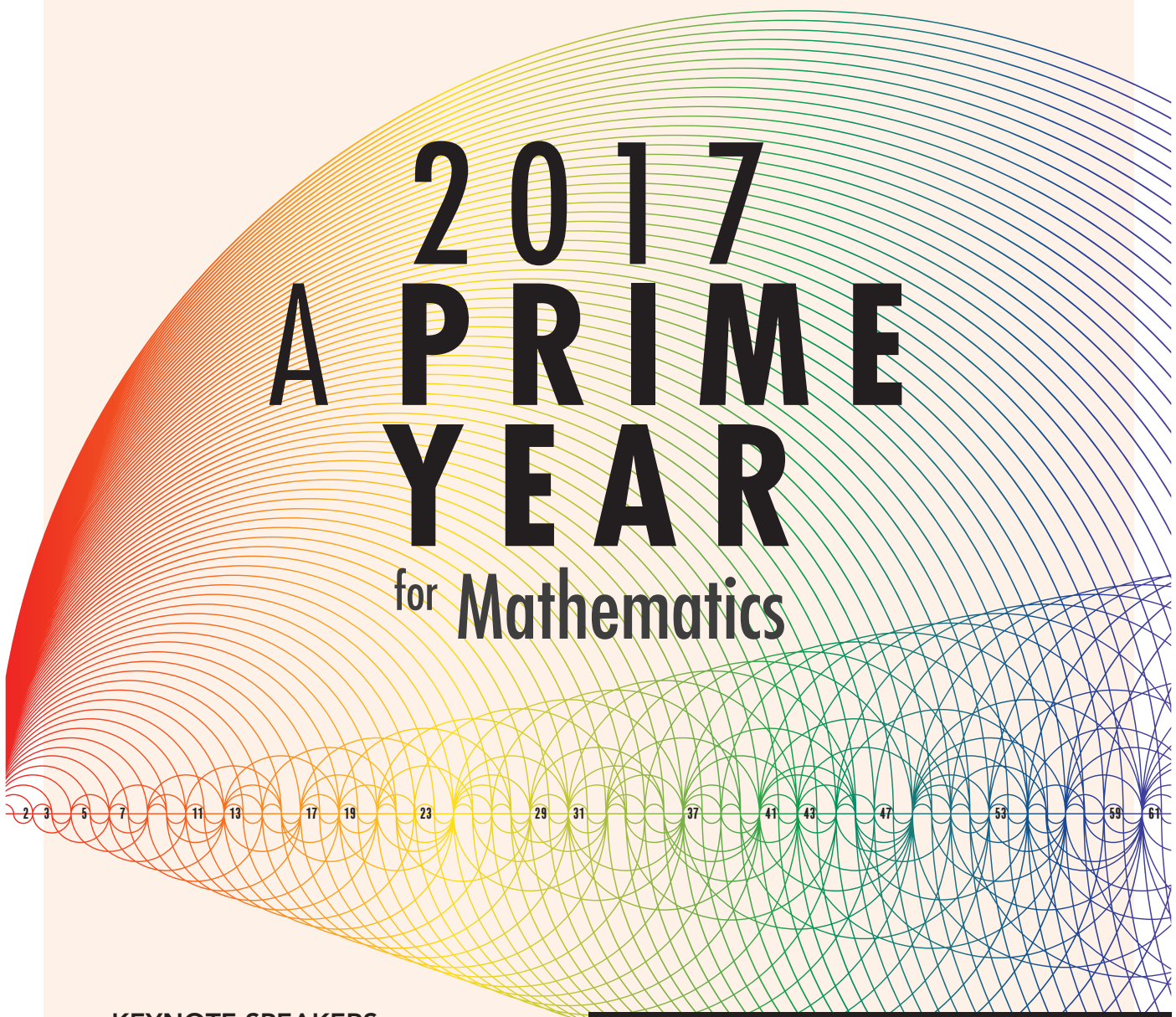
*Carolyn Smith*





# MCATA FALL CONFERENCE

# 2017 A PRIME YEAR for Mathematics



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## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**Michael Pruner**  
Vancouver, BC

Michael Pruner is a high school mathematics teacher with a Thinking Classroom in North Vancouver. He is also the president of the BC Association of Mathematics Teachers.



**Sunil Singh**  
Toronto, ON

Author of the book *Pi of Life: The Hidden Happiness of Mathematics*, and a self-proclaimed Mathematical Jester, Sunil Singh is transforming the way mathematics is revealed and discussed all over North America.

October 20 and 21, 2017  
Edmonton Marriott  
River Cree, Enoch, Alberta

## Social Events

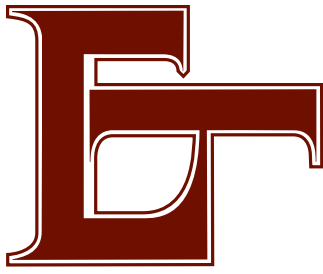
- Wine and Cheese
- Games Night

@MCATA\_Tweets



The Alberta  
Teachers' Association

For more information, visit  
[www.mathteachers.ab.ca](http://www.mathteachers.ab.ca)



## The ATA Educational Trust

*Supporting teachers' professional learning, research and resources*

### Dr B T Keeler Continuing Education Bursaries

Each year in June, the Trust draws the names of 30 (or more) certificated teachers who apply for bursaries to enroll in courses in the area of their specialization in the upcoming summer or school year.

*Application deadline: May 1*

### ATA Specialist Council Conference Grants

Each year in October, the Trust awards 30 (or more) grants to teachers and others to assist with expenses associated with attending ATA specialist council conferences or events.

*Application deadline: September 30*

### Current Trust Programs

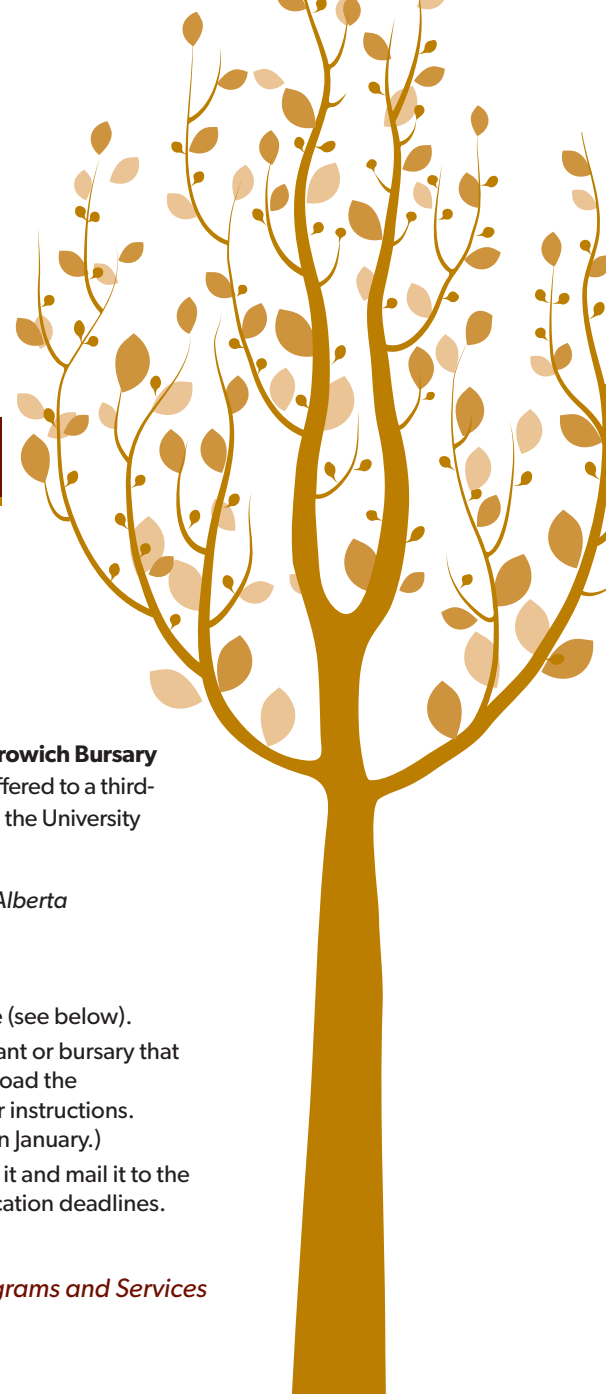
**\$1,000 Orest and Francina Lazarowich Bursary in Technology Education** to be offered to a third-year education student enrolled in the University of Alberta's CTS program

*Offered through the University of Alberta*

### How to Apply

- Go to the Association's website (see below).
- Read the information for the grant or bursary that you are considering and download the appropriate application form or instructions. (Application forms are posted in January.)
- Complete the application, sign it and mail it to the Trust administrator. Note application deadlines.

*To donate to the Trust, visit [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) and click on For Members > Programs and Services > Grants, Awards and Scholarships > ATA Educational Trust.*



Since 1978, the Trust has awarded over \$1,000,000 in grants and bursaries

Celebrating a colleague's successful career in education?  
**Consider donating to the Trust!**

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