

# THE GATEWAY

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MIKEOTTO

**BALLAD OF THE LONELY ROCK BAND** Oshawa's Cuff the Duke entertained fans last Friday at the Dinwoodie lounge, playing their off-the-cuff brand of power-chord alt-country to a royal reception.

## Study reveals danger of spiked energy drinks

KIRSTEN GORUK  
News Staff

Combining alcohol and energy drinks—a popular practice among university students—is a dangerous choice, according to a US study that attributes the mixture with high-risk consequences.

The study, carried out at Wake Forest University School of Medicine in North Carolina, revealed that consumption of spiked energy drinks, as opposed to basic alcohol intake, increases the chances of being injured, needing medical attention, drunk driving, being taken advantage of sexually, and taking advantage of someone else sexually.

But if students are surprised to find out about the risks, the study's lead researcher, Dr Mary Claire O'Brien, can explain the facts simply.

"You wouldn't sit down and have ten beers and ten espressos at the same time, but some energy drinks have levels of caffeine equal to an espresso, and [students are] mixing them with alcohol," O'Brien explained.

Here in Edmonton and at the U of A, the popularity of alcoholic energy drinks is still prevalent.

"It was at an all-time high about a year ago, and it has started to die off—I wouldn't say significantly, but a little bit," said Brodie Wagner, general manager of Bar Wild on Whyte Avenue.

Wagner's bar serves Red Bull, but

they don't promote the mixture of it with alcohol. In fact, Wagner explained they're bound by law not to combine the two. The shots of alcohol and energy drink are served separately; mixing them is then the choice of the consumer.

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**DR MARY CLAIRE O'BRIEN**  
LEAD RESEARCHER  
WAKE FOREST SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Owgi Black, assistant manager of Hudson's On Campus, said he's noticed similar trends.

"Jäger-bombs [shots of Jägermeister dropped into a glass of Red Bull] are pretty much a popular shot anywhere you go. But we don't push them," Black explained. He further admitted that he personally steers clear of the whole spiked energy drink phenomenon.

PLEASE SEE **SPIKED** ♦ PAGE 3

## Popularity of online courses soars

Statistics Canada study affirms the growing trend for out-of-classroom learning, with Albertans taking a leading interest in Web-based education

SCOTT FENWICK  
News Staff

Statistics Canada reports that more Canadians than ever are using the Internet to learn, and Alberta is leading the way.

The report, released 30 October, showed that 30 per cent of Alberta adults went online in 2005 for education-related reasons—more than in any other province. Nationally, 26 per cent of Canadians surveyed in StatsCan's *Canadian Internet Use Survey* used the Web as a learning resource. The study also noted that that nearly 80 per cent of full-time and part-time students used the Internet as part of their studies.

The study confirmed a trend toward Internet-based learning, according to Michael Hotrum, an information technologist who helps University instructors use technology to teach in the Faculty of Extension. He explained that Alberta's booming economy and the job market are the main factors for the growth.

"Companies are looking for what they would call 'just-in-time learning,'" he said. "[Employers] want to have a particular set of skills very quickly. These individuals can't go [off-site] for a particular period of time."

The trend in Alberta has risen sharply this year. eCampus Alberta, a consortium of 15 Alberta postsecondary institutions offering online

education, reported that registration in online courses rose by 45 per cent to 5189 for the 2007/08 school year.

The rise in online learning doesn't surprise Karl Low, a distance-education student at Athabasca University, an institution that offers approximately 700 online distance courses, including bachelor's and master's degrees.

"I find the freedom I want to do part-time jobs and not have to go in [to class] at any set time," he said from his home in Calgary. "You do the assignments when it works for you."

As the current Vice-President (External) of the Athabasca University Students' Union, Low also credits Alberta's economy for propelling the growth of online education reflected in the study.

"Our economy is flying, so getting a job is easy," he said. "You're finding more and more people are getting a job while they learn. They find the flexibility of online learning is worth it."

Although some U of A faculties are offering online distance courses for graduate students, Sandra Dowie, the University's e-learning development officer, said not to expect as many for undergraduates.

She explained that the University, which remains unaffiliated with eCampus Alberta, wants to emphasize online education with graduate programs instead.

"We see ourselves largely as an on-campus learning experience," she said. "[Instruction] may be enriched

by online activities, but [...] we are primarily a face-to-face institution."

In fact, fewer U of A students are in online distance courses than last year. According to the Registrar's office, 476 students are taking online distance courses from the University during the 2007/08 academic year, down from 634 in 2006/07. Likewise, registrations for online distance courses fell from 908 to 572 over the past year.

The study also found that rural Canadians were more likely to use the Internet for distance learning than urban Canadians.

According to the study, which is published in the StatsCan publication *Education Matters*, "Electronic distance learning could be a possible solution to the postsecondary access problems facing rural youth."

Likewise, Hotrum said that the online world has made education in general more decentralized and accessible. He added that part of the decentralization comes from social software like online discussion forums, webcasts, weblogs, and mobile devices.

"Mentoring and tutoring online has increased dramatically and can involve a student in Barrhead seeking physics tutoring from Bangalore, India," Hotrum said. "With the advent of social software, we're entering into areas of real student engagement, where students are creating things, [and] working together in groups."

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## Hairy hairy hairdo

Not shaving for November? We've got some suggestions for what to do with that facial farm of yours.

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## Hungry hungry hippo

Going hungry's a bitch. But food can be expensive. Don't end up like this guy: learn to feed yourself for less.

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