

# THE GATEWAY

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**GENTLEMEN, WE CAN REBUILD HIM** Students fine-tune their robot, 50/50, before competition yesterday. Each year, Mec E 260 students design and construct a machine to complete a set task—in this case, dropping marbles into specific cups. SAMBROOKS

## Healthy diets lead to better grades—study

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA  
Senior News Editor

Students looking to ace their final exams had better watch what they eat, as new research has drawn a definite correlation between healthy diets and better grades.

University of Alberta Public Health Services professor Dr Paul Veugelers led a study involving 5200 fifth graders in Nova Scotia that proved academic performance was linked to dietary quality.

While the findings, which have been published in the April edition of the *Journal of School Health*, may seem like common sense, Veugelers pointed to the fact that very little research has been done in this particular area.

“The research that has been done was always focusing more on the malnutrition side [...] so the bulk of the literature that is out there comes from Africa and developing countries,” he said, noting that these findings didn’t address the issue of children who get enough calories through unhealthy food choices.

Using the internationally recognized Diet Quality Index, Veugelers and his colleagues summarized the healthiness of the children’s diets by looking at a number of criteria, including dietary moderation, balance of food groups, and the amount of vitamins consumed. Then, in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Department of Education, they looked at how the students performed on the standardized provincial literacy assessment.

In order to ensure that other external factors such as socio-

economic standing, paternal education levels, and gender weren’t screwing the stats, Veugelers explained they accounted for all this “background noise” by coming up with multivariate odds ratios to describe the correlation between diet and academic performance.

What they found was that children who had the best diets were 30 per cent less likely to fail the standardized test than children with the worst diets, and when other contributing external factors were included, that number jumped to 41 per cent.

“If you do this study in a few localized schools, then it is really difficult to come to good conclusions, but this study is good in that we went province-wide,” Veugelers said, adding that the principle of manipulating your diet to manipulate your ability to learn works at any age.

“The important thing here—and I think that applies not only to elementary school students but also to university students—is that these findings basically justify that we invest not only in more hours of studying, but also invest in more time to eat healthy,” he continued.

Veugelers reiterated that while there are “a lot of things we already know,” there’s little scientific evidence to support this conventional wisdom. In fact, there are no studies looking at whether university students with healthier diets perform better than their junk-food-loving counterparts.

“But I think it’s reasonable to extrapolate that [correlation]. If you give me \$1 million, I’ll investigate it for you,” he said.

## Students’ show of silence speaks volumes about tolerance

Sixth annual Day of Silence raises awareness of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer issues that participants say get overlooked

ALEX WITT  
News Writer

Day of Silence organizers are encouraging students to see what it feels like to be unable to express their thoughts by standing in solidarity with those who experience this phenomenon every day.

On Wednesday 2 April at 3pm, members of Side Rite are hosting the sixth annual event at Celebration Plaza, by the south entrance of the Administration building. There, participants will hear from former city councillor Michael Phair, Students’ Union President Michael Janz, and others who will stress that there’s still progress to be made towards fully accepting of members of the queer

community.

Side Rite—named after a chemical compound that gets stronger when exposed to acid—is a University of Alberta-based group dedicated to supporting members of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (GLBTQ) community and to raising awareness of the lingering prejudices against its members.

“The Day of Silence is a day of recognition for many people being GLBTQ who feel they are forced to be silent about their feelings and their orientation, and I think this is a way to express what that means to everyone else, when you have to be silent on the way you want to talk about yourself,” Phair said.

Although many of Side Rite’s mem-

bers are students living in residence, Michael Janz, who got to know the group through his experience in Lister governance, explained that anyone can join or be supportive of them.

**“People forget that homophobia exists in a lot of forms because it isn’t as often talked about in the media.”**

GILLIAN SCARLETT  
FOURTH YEAR ARTS STUDENT

“Residence, [is the] one place on campus where many students are away

from home for the first time, and find themselves, and often become more in touch with their sexual identity, and it’s one place we really work to have a positive, open-minded, welcoming community,” Janz said.

The Day of Silence event began at the University of Virginia in 1996 to raise attention to harassment and bullying of members of the queer community. The University of Alberta is the only university campus in Canada to maintain the event, although organizers like Gillian Scarlett and Bronwyn Farr say that interest is growing in high schools and colleges.

“People forget that homophobia exists in a lot of forms because it isn’t as often talked about in the media [...] but everyone should be conscious of

it,” said Scarlett, who’s in her final year of a bachelor of music degree.

This year, the event is dedicated to Lawrence King, a 15-year-old Californian who was shot and killed in February of this year. A classmate was allegedly offended because Lawrence had revealed himself to be gay.

However, Phair pointed out that mainstream media doesn’t pay much attention to homophobia anymore.

“There has been, and needed to be, so much emphasis on human rights legislation and the legal area, that’s where a lot of the media attention was focused,” Phair said. “I think that it has been a challenge to get people and the media to refocus and think about the new directions that are being put forward.

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### Le centenaire du CSJ

While the U of A is gearing up to celebrate 100 years, the Campus Saint-Jean also says *bonne fête* in 2008

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### Les prix de la CIS

Plenty of *félicitations* are in order as our sports team assembles to hand out this year’s Gateway Sports Awards

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