

ALUMNI connections

Tim Nguyen

Captures the heart of
the School of Creative
and Performing Arts

SPRING 2019

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Photos by Tim Nguyen

behind the lens



What do the divisions of Dance, Drama and Music in the School of Creative and Performing Arts have in common?

Well, besides having talented students, alumni, faculty and staff, they are all photographed by Tim Nguyen.

In 2014, **Tim Nguyen, BFA'06 (Drama)**, returned to campus to take photos of the drama production *Jebat* and since has snapped more than 150,000 photos for the school.

"I like to say that the University of Calgary has given me two art degrees: the first in drama and the second in photography," he says. "Being back on campus has allowed me to develop my art in a way I never could have imagined."

Nguyen is a sought-after photographer for the local arts community and has worked with many local performing arts companies including Downstage Theatre, Vertigo Theatre, Handsome Alice Theatre, Lunchbox Theatre and Dancers' Studio West. Since his first theatre gig with Downstage more than 12 years ago, Nguyen has continued to build relationships in the industry to expand his portfolio, but says many of these connections started on campus as a student. "When Downstage brought me in, it was because **Simon Mallett (MFA'06)**, who was in drama at the same time as me, put my name forward and knew my work," Nguyen says. "Since then, I've had the chance to work with many alumni from the school in different capacities."

In the decade that Nguyen has been photographing the local arts scene, he has built a collection of photos that could tell stories on how the scene has grown and changed. "Last year, I realized I had surpassed 1 million photos in storage on my drive, most of which had been poorly organized," Nguyen says. "As I sorted through them, it was amazing to see so many of our favourite performers from different productions, different eras — some with companies that don't even exist anymore. What really touched me, though, was finding photos of community members who are no longer with us. It reminded me how fortunate we are to

have such a close-knit community. It has been an honour for me to immortalize so many incredible artistic voices."

Nguyen's extensive experience has brought him to nearly every stage in the city, but the one he knows best is right here on the UCalgary campus. Having been a drama student, he "knows these spaces right down to the floorboards," and, as a result, can better predict where the performers will move throughout a scene. This familiarity lets him focus on the shot and on capturing the heart of the performers. As the contract photographer for the school, he shoots all divisions and this has given him exposure to different types of artists. "I'm definitely most familiar with dramatic performances, but dance offers many similar theatrical elements," Nguyen says. "The hardest part with dance is keeping up with the dancers!"



Metamorphoses, 2017

Photographing the Music division has been a new adventure, as it has utilized him for fewer performances and more advertisements. This has allowed Nguyen to integrate his love for architectural photography, composing images around the amazing structural lines of the auditoriums he works in. “I love shooting in places like the Rozsa Centre and the Jack Singer,” he says. “When I shot UCalgary’s 50th Anniversary Concert at the Jack Singer, it was amazing to be able to juxtapose ornate curvature of the acoustic panelling with Professor Edmond Agopian’s beautifully dramatic conducting.”

When asked how he approaches photographing the arts, Nguyen says it varies based on the complexity of the performance. For most shows, it works best to go into a production shoot, also known as a “shoot thru,” without significant insight into the performance, allowing him to capture freely. For others, it’s important to know what key moments need to be captured, and when and where they are happening on stage.

“I’ve learned to go through a checklist with the production team beforehand to see if there are any smoke effects, strobe lights, gunshots, dirt effects or water features — anything that I might want to be ready in advance for or that would get my lens dirty,” Nguyen says. He is usually brought in to shoot the dress rehearsal, often the night before a show opens. Nguyen describes his shooting style like a high-intensity workout, “I love the energy and furious pace that comes with shooting performing arts,” he says. “There have been a couple with the school that have had audiences on multiple sides of the stage [like 2018’s wrestling-themed *Trafford Tanzi*] and, by the end, I’ve worked up nearly as much sweat as the cast!”

Nguyen is proud to have been part of another great performance season with the school and is excited about the release of his latest work, the *Rococo Punk* photo shoot, which was both a commission and a passion project, which was shot during Alumni Weekend 2018. “We built a complete two-tiered stage, just for the shoot,” he says. “We brought in alumni, faculty, staff and students. If you had attended Alumni Weekend, you would have been able to stop in and tour the set, chat and see us in action.”

“This is the largest production shoot I have ever been in charge of, the largest *Photoshop* project I’ve ever attempted and I am *incredibly* proud of the result. Not only was it beautiful to capture, but the sense of community at the shoot was an amazing reminder of where we’ve come from and why we do what we love.”

“

*I love the
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Tim Nguyen

50th Anniversary Concert, 2017

Contemplating Commerce

How **Philosophy** and **Business Studies** Shape the Economic Landscape

Business and philosophy may sound like strange bedfellows, but, for those who ventured beyond required courses like Philosophy 279 (Logic) and into the major, their degree is increasingly opening doors in the business world. In November 2017, CNBC reported that the CEO of New York-based CA Technologies was hiring philosophy majors to help fill its talent gap. In April 2018, the CBC explored “why businesses are hiring philosophers to help their bottom line,” and found that companies are engaging them in order to help CEOs contemplate difficult decisions.

UCalgary alumnus **Greg Guichon, BA’76 (Philosophy)**, is a strong believer in the relationship between these two fields and is proud to support current philosophy students through the Guichon Family Bursary in Philosophy. Guichon is the chairman of Toronto-based Barometer Capital and recalls his formative years on campus as turbulent, but creative times. “It was the tail end of the Vietnam War and new value systems were being created,” he says. Shortly following his undergrad, Guichon went on to

complete his MBA at the University of Western Ontario. Guichon describes his degrees as complementary.

“The MBA teaches you how to arrange the numbers and better understand financial statements. These statements tell a story, but the story is in the past,” he says. “The philosophy degree allows you to take the past and tell the story of the future.”

Each student takes a different route and has different areas of interest. Guichon enjoyed the opportunity to take Marxian economics and Marxian philosophy in the same semester, a combination that influenced his perspective of the capitalist system. “I believe a philosophical approach can improve the real world, and a way to do that is to improve the economic situation and living conditions through proper investments,” he says. Guichon incorporates his study of philosophers and logic training when considering investment decisions. Every day, he interviews CEOs who ask him to invest in their company, and his background helps him to understand their business plans and visions presented. “If their business philosophy is concise and logical from a business point of view, then we invest. And if it isn’t, we don’t.”

In 2009, philosophy professor **Dr. David Dick, PhD**, was recruited to be the Chair in Business Ethics in the Department of

Philosophy. Now, nearly 10 years later, Dick is a Fellow of the Canadian Centre for Advanced Leadership (CCAL) at the Haskayne School of Business and an assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy where he teaches classes including Business Ethics and the Philosophy of Money. In addition to this role, he leads the Calgary-based Integrity Network, a group of ethics and compliance professionals from industrial, academic and non-profit sectors that meets to discuss current business ethics issues. Dick, who may be found downtown more than your average philosophy professor, sees the two areas as complementary. “Where business wants to simplify, philosophy wants to complicate, and too much of either of these can be bad,” he says. Dick explains that philosophical training can help people see when things are oversimplified or don’t make sense, while business has a need to distil things into plans that can be easily understood and carried out.

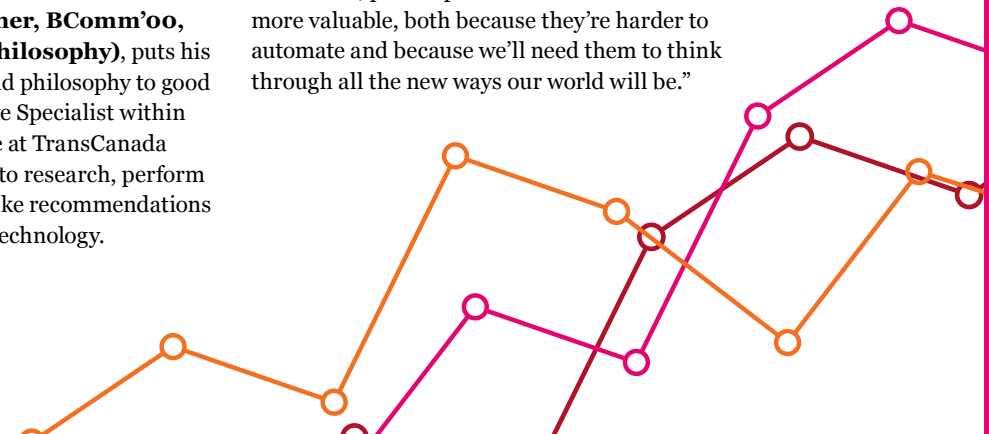
Alumnus **Dr. Mike Steiner, BComm’00, BA’05, MA’07, PhD’11 (Philosophy)**, puts his training in both business and philosophy to good use as the Strategic Initiative Specialist within the Chief Information Office at TransCanada Pipelines. Part of his role is to research, perform decision analysis, and to make recommendations related to information and technology.

When asked about his advice to undergraduate students from these respective disciplines, Steiner says it’s different for each. “For those in business, please take a wide range of Humanities/Arts classes, there is so much to know beyond what is simply required to earn a business degree,” he says. To those in philosophy, Steiner recommends they take some computer, business and sciences classes. “You need to know how the world works and learn some basic business skills in order to prepare yourself adequately for success in the ‘real’ world.”

So what does the future hold for the relationship between business and philosophy? “It seems like the future is bright,” says Dick. “Business is recognizing the value in philosophical training, and philosophy is discovering that there are genuine philosophical issues in business. As more tasks become automated, philosophical skills will become more valuable, both because they’re harder to automate and because we’ll need them to think through all the new ways our world will be.”



Greg Guichon



The Columnist • Alumni Views

The Right Tools for Leadership

In 2004, I was tasked to manage the office of a real estate marketing company that consisted of 20 to 25 employees. One of the vice-presidents, who had taken me under his wing and who believed in me more than I believed in myself

back then, handed me a book by Henry Mintzberg called *Managers Not MBAs*.

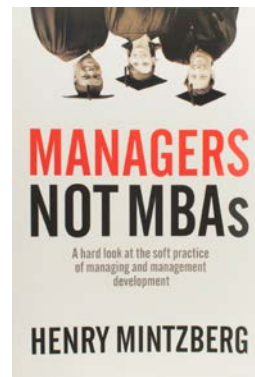
He asked me to consider what my own qualities were that caused those around me to place their trust and faith in me in the manner they did, and to use these qualities to become a leader. At the time, I was not only young, but also entirely self-taught in business: I was not certain that I could measure up to the expectations of leadership.

I kept that book, and I have thought about this conversation with the VP many times over the years as I went on to become the first female to trade in a nationwide trust company, then an entrepreneur, then a Faculty of Arts graduate, and now I'm aiming for a future JD/MBA focusing in corporate and securities law. Over this time, my own concept of great leadership has

evolved as a reflection of my life experiences. Perhaps yours will, too, over the years to come.

Experts around the globe all seem to have varying perspectives on the approach and qualities that make for great leadership. There are many academic programs specifically designed to enhance leadership and business-management skills. Mintzberg, however, argues that good leadership and management skills are not learned in classrooms, but rather by doing. As I ponder these two perspectives in the present day, I would argue that the real formula for leadership is something in-between.

For me, the Faculty of Arts offered a broad range of undergraduate opportunities that could lead to an almost endless array of future career paths, although I went in with a career in law specifically in mind. In my classes, I used my existing tool kit and developed a variety of other skills such as collaboration, creative problem-solving, critical thinking, analysis and project management. Success in any arts degree, as with real-world leadership and management, relies heavily on the ability to learn and use all of these skills. Success as a leader in law will, too, and I am proud to say that my undergraduate education afforded me the opportunity to add a lot of these valuable tools to my kit.



Featuring
Heidi J. T. Exner, BA'18 (Law and Society),
member of the Faculty of Arts Alumni Advisory Council



English group

Students and Alumni Buzzing About Alumni Coffee Chats



Economics group



Law and Society group



Political Science group

Thank you to our amazing volunteers who have helped launch a semester of engaging conversations. Alumni Coffee Chats are informal mentorship opportunities designed to help students explore different career options and ask questions around gaining experience during school, what to do after graduation, and hear about how alumni career paths have evolved.

Thanks to:

- Max Chan, BA'01 (Economics)
- Jordan Baylon, BA'07 (English)
- Caleigh Hanks, BA'07 (Law and Society; Communications)
- Tonie Minhas, BA'15 (Political Science)
- Helena Deng BA'10 (History)



Design Thinking:

What is It and Should I be Doing It?

A glance at AnneMarie Dorland's step-by-step approach to design thinking

Unsolvable. Insurmountable. Impossible. These are not words **Dr. AnneMarie Dorland, PhD'18**, uses often. In fact, Dorland is changing the way students, faculty and the community are approaching lofty and challenging social issues. As a scholar and instructor at UCalgary's College of Discovery, Creativity & Innovation, Dorland tasks her classes to take on challenges and engage in experiments with radical intent.



AnneMarie Dorland (right)

In the fall of 2018, Dorland led a Block Week course called Leading Through Design Practice, UNIV 401, that challenged students to tackle the topic of how to feed 9 billion people by the year 2050. This class provided students with a new tool kit to use in tackling social innovation and introduced a step-by-step approach to the process of design thinking.

"Design thinking is a term that gets thrown around a lot these days," explains Dorland. "To me, designing is changing something from an existing state to a preferable one — this goes for product design, experience design, service design — it's the deliberate creation of change for the better. Design thinking is the term we use for the mental shortcuts, practices and habits designers use to create this change quickly, repeatedly and reliably in a creative way. It isn't a recipe for good design; it's a recipe for thinking about real-life problems in a new way."

Dorland's approach and expertise has been shaped by an extensive career in graphic design and communications, and more recently through her doctoral research. "My research examined the effects of design thinking discourse on the work of a design team," Dorland says, adding she explored this by drawing on ethnographic observations of client pitches, team brainstorming and daily work in the studio itself. Among other outcomes, her findings will help those working inside the studio to better understand the impact of design thinking discourse on their work. To those outside the organization, this work provides insight into design culture.

In UNIV 401, Dorland guides students through a step-by-step process to address challenging social issues, but she believes these steps can also be considered when facing any challenge. Dorland explains that, as a tool, design thinking can open the doors to how we tackle the problems we face in our communities and in our businesses by using empathy, collaboration and a bias towards action. "What designers can teach us is that we can deliberately approach a problem by *thinking* about it in a way that has been deliberately and strategically *designed*, and we can all learn from that," says Dorland.

To help people engage these strategies in their daily lives, Dorland outlines a few simple steps that designers follow:



1. Ask the right questions. Try phrasing your question as, "*How might we...*" and move away from finding a solution. Questions are good for making more questions, and, the harder you work on this part, the more innovative your final result will be.
2. Take a walk in someone else's shoes. Whose experience do you need to understand to answer your question in full? Better yet, go ask them or follow them around for a while — you'll see your challenge from a whole new perspective.
3. Get your idea out of your head. Build a version of your idea on paper or in three dimensions and hand it over to someone else to learn about what you can do better in the next version.
4. Test it like you mean it. Designers don't test to prove themselves right: they test their ideas to find out what they are missing. It is a brave move, and it helps improve your solution every time.

Give these tips a try next time you encounter a challenging issue at home or at work. The results may surprise you.

Worth a Thousand Words



Amplifying advocacy,
one photo at a time



Youth participating in Level's summer Indigenous Youth Outreach Program, in partnership with Northern Youth Abroad, envision themselves as justices at the Federal Court of Appeal in Ottawa. Kenya-Jade Pinto for Level.

The roar of the electric razor fades and with a deep breath she looks into the mirror to contemplate her new look. Along with 15 inches of hair, **Kenya-Jade Pinto** has given time, energy and compassion to the causes she cares about. From being an advocate on campus for undergraduate students, raising funds and awareness for cancer research, to amplifying stories of injustice around the world through her photography, Pinto is an alumna to follow.

Pinto, BA'13 (International Relations), is an Indo-Kenyan/Canadian documentary photographer and lawyer, based out of Toronto. Pinto grew up on Kenya's southern coast and moved to Calgary in 2001, where she attended high school and later the University of Calgary. She built an impressive resume while on campus, including serving as the Students' Union VP Academic, helping to develop and launch the Women in Leadership Club and volunteering as a photographer for AIDS Calgary Awareness Association, now called HIV Community Link. In her last year on campus, Pinto lost her father to lung cancer. To raise funds and awareness, she co-led Terry's Cause on Campus, an off-shoot of the Terry Fox Run that supports cancer research. As part of her dedication to helping rally students and support, she shaved her head.

Advocacy is a word Pinto knows well. After graduating, she chose to continue her studies by pursuing a Juris Doctor at the University of Ottawa because of its strong social justice program. Pinto describes her degrees as part of her advocacy tool kit and says both her undergraduate and graduate work has contributed different components. Pinto says her arts degree helped her better understand the impact of colonialism across Africa, and, surprisingly, her law degree helped her become a better photographer. "The law program emphasizes the importance of professional responsibility," she says. "They remind young lawyers that, above everything else, what you have is your reputation." Pinto takes this ethical perspective with her when approaching her projects, especially when working with vulnerable populations. "A younger me gave little thought to the unintended consequences that something like street photography could have on the persons photographed," says Pinto. "As I gain experience and a better understanding of the power imbalance that comes with holding the camera, I approach things differently."

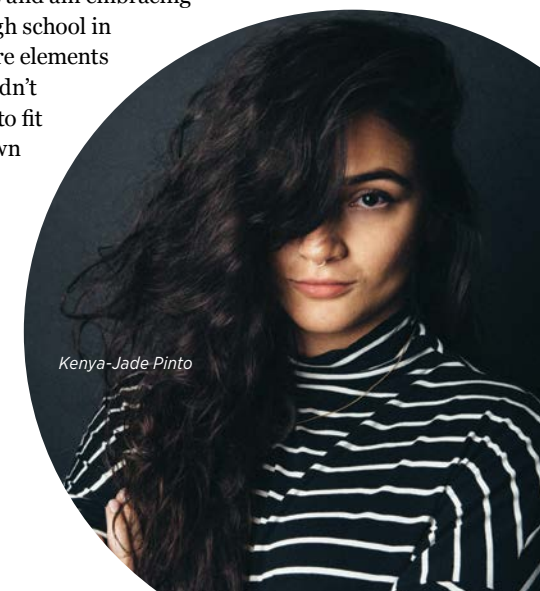
Pinto has travelled to Uganda with Photographers Without Borders where she documented Tackle Africa, an organization that

uses the draw of soccer to deliver sexual health education to young people on football pitches across the African continent. With the International Commission of Jurists in Nairobi, Pinto took a visual-advocacy approach with Not Yet Home, a two-week field mission to listen to and photograph displaced communities throughout Kenya and bolster ongoing public-interest litigation against the government. In Canada, she has documented her work with Level, a Canadian charity breaking down barriers between justice professionals and Indigenous youth through culturally anchored justice-education programming aimed at empowering youth to be leaders in their classrooms and communities.

Looking through a different lens, Pinto has taken on a new challenge as associate producer for an independent film based on the novel *Scarborough* by Catherine Hernandez. *Scarborough* is the story of three youth — one Indigenous, one Filipino and one white — who fight to rise above a system that consistently fails them. As associate producer, Pinto says she gets to wear a few different hats. "I'm responsible for external-facing things like social media and the film's website, but I will also be taking photographs for the film and have been

helping review the script breakdown," she says. "It's exciting, and I'm willing to take on different challenges."

Through photography, and more recently film, Pinto has the opportunity to unpack tough subjects in a way that helps cut through the noise. "We live in a world where we consume so much information that things get confusing and muddled," she says. "When I started this journey into photography and film, I encountered some 'imposter syndrome,' but I've since gained courage in both my logical and creative strengths and am embracing my identity. In high school in Calgary, there were elements of my identity I didn't embrace in order to fit in, but I have grown to appreciate that these are gifts that help further the causes I am passionate about."



Kenya-Jade Pinto



Q&A with Kye Kocher

For some people, Detroit is known for its urban decay due to years of economic decline, but, for others, it holds inspiration for what urban farming can mean for communities and our food chain. **For Kye Kocher, BA'11 (English)**, it was exposure during university to urban farming in this metropolitan area that inspired his passion for urban and rural farming in Alberta. Kocher is a local entrepreneur and advocate whose time and energy have helped build awareness and grow the industry in Calgary and area.

As founder of Grand Trunk Veggies, his own local farm, he and a partner initially began selling their crop at the Sunnyside Market. While managing his own plots, he has worked with local community gardens and is a founding farmer with YYC Growers. Kocher was recognized by *Avenue Magazine* as a 2018 Top 40 Under 40 for his work in the industry and our communities.

We sat down with Kocher to get his advice on our own urban plots and learn more about his aspirations for the future of farming.

What's the coolest thing you've grown in Calgary?

For me, it was tobacco. It's a marginally difficult plant to grow and has a really interesting process. I'm used to doing vegetables where the end result is eating, but tobacco had to be dried before using. I didn't feel as rushed as I do with vegetables and enjoyed the ritual involved.

What's your biggest growing fail?

Tomatoes. You would think I had mastered those by now, but I fail on those all the time. My plants don't come out as bountiful as they should. I've also failed on garlic. Calgary can be really good for garlic, but one year it just didn't work out.

I live in a condo. Can I grow vegetables?

Vegetables don't grow very well inside. You can use a home growing unit or, if you have a balcony, that would be your best bet. Fortunately, if you aren't in a situation to grow your own, we have a growing community of local plots you can rent and local farmers you can support.

How can I attract more bees to my vegetable plots?

Bees are important and can help vegetables, too. The best way to attract them is to plant things that are complimentary to what you are growing. Nasturtiums, calendulas, lilies and roses attract pollinators. Oh, and sunflowers; they are the best. They can attract a whole bunch of bees due to their surface area and they pull toxins out of the soil.

If I want to plant vegetables in my backyard, do I have to worry about the soil?

It's definitely important to think about where you're located in the city. If you're in a flood zone, you'll have different concerns than up on the hill. The key is to create healthy soil, bring in biology, compost and worms. It will take time, but it's worth it.

How can I grow marijuana plants in Calgary?

They call it weed for a reason; it actually grows quite easily. You can grow the plants in the ground or indoors, but keep in mind they can be quite strong-smelling.

The most complicated part is maximizing the growth of the flowers and that you only have females. I'm not an expert in this area, but I am curious to see if there will be a noticeable difference in the variety of garden plants this year. **For rules and regulations please refer to alberta.ca/cannabis*

What do you hope for the future of urban farming?

In general, I feel we need to start focusing on our food and bring more exposure to what needs to change in the world. I think urban farming is a step towards that and people need to know it exists, that it's a possibility. Whether you can do it yourself or you support others who do it, whether it be urban or rural farming, it's important.

People need to keep in mind it's pretty easy, just start small. If you have space you think others could use, reach out and make it useful. You can always reach out to YYC Growers or if you are ever interested in learning more about it you can find me at grandtrunkveg@gmail.com

Message from the Dean

It might come as a surprise to some alumni that in 2020 the Faculty of Arts will celebrate its 10th anniversary. Many of you might still think of your connections to one of the four former separate faculties (Humanities, Social Sciences, Fine Arts, Communication & Culture) that came together to make the current Faculty of Arts in 2010. For more recent Arts grads, as well as for members of our current student body, this large, diverse faculty is the only one they've known.

In either case, the Faculty of Arts has remained committed to excellence in all of its programs, fostering a culture where we engage, inspire and discover. Among the developments over these years, one that stands out is the growth of interdisciplinary opportunities for our students. In the faculty today, we offer 15 interdisciplinary programs that address current themes, issues and problems in our societies. These are remarkably popular programs. In fact, one in every five students in Arts is enrolled as a major in an interdisciplinary program. These programs introduce students to a broad range of research experiences and classroom learning.

Indeed, whether they've completed a degree in a specific Arts discipline or taken the interdisciplinary route, our alumni are well-positioned to embrace an amazingly diverse range of careers and life experiences, post-degree. For Kenya-Jade Pinto, BA'13 (International Relations), a combination of international relations and law led her to a career in advocacy and film. For Greg Guichon, BA'76 (Philosophy), a combination of philosophy and business influenced his approach to decision-making. With our vast number of alumni, I imagine we could see an infinite combination of skills applied in the workplace.

By bringing these alumni back to campus through the launch of the Alumni Coffee Chat series, we have been able to expose students to Arts graduates from across the faculty who are working in a variety of careers. The positive feedback from students and alumni has been encouraging and we look forward to continuing this series by recruiting more alumni volunteers. We also look forward to the next decade for the Faculty of Arts, in which we will continue to engage, discover and inspire.



For more information,
please contact

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🐦 TWEETS FROM THE DEAN



@R_Sigurdson — 22 Nov 2018

What do you do w/ a BA? How about co-found a platform-based start-up like @bootkik, whose co-founders are @UCalgaryArts grads — Leighton Healey (HIST) & Travis Martin (POLI). Thnx for today's great #entrepreneurial experience. #LiberalArts



@R_Sigurdson — 30 Oct 2018

On Monday we had a great dinner w/ @UCalgaryArts alumni Ernie Kwok, Andrew Strong, Jarrett Wilde & Lindsay Mack. W/ @Janakayr & David Wong. @ucalgaryalumni