

Student Vote Could Have Major Impact in Upcoming Elections

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CUP Central Bureau Chief

TORONTO (CUP) — For the first time in five years, the federal election will be held while most students are on-campus and with so many potential young voters able to cast ballots on Jan. 23, the student vote could have a serious impact on the final election results.

Nowhere will the student vote count more than in the heart of downtown Toronto, where University of Toronto residence students fall squarely in the hotly contested Trinity-Spadina riding, sure to be a nail biter.

Incumbent Liberal MP Tony Ianno will be seeking re-election, while hot on his toes is New Democrat challenger Olivia Chow. Chow narrowly lost her bid to unseat Ianno in the 2004 election - Ianno raked in 23,202 votes compared to Chow's 22,397, while the Conservatives and the Greens trailed far behind at 4,605 and 2,259 respectively.

An issue many voters cited in 2004 was the fact that Chow had not stepped down as a Toronto city councillor before seeking a seat in the House of Commons. Chow is responding to local residents' concerns by resigning her seat as councillor, meaning Trinity-Spadina is set to get new representation at City Hall too. With only an 805-vote margin deciding the victory in 2004, Green and Conservative candidates may influence the outcome of Trinity-Spadina's election. Sam Goldstein is the Conservative Party's candidate. The Green Party plans to field candidates in all 308 ridings with the over \$1 million they have received since the last federal election in public funding, but as of press time, the name of the Green candidate for Trinity-Spadina was not available.

In fact, there were 10 seats in the last election that were decided by less than 300 votes, giving students the opportunity to make a real difference by voting. Though not all of the 857 students in the New College residences are eligible voters, if enough students make it to the ballot boxes, they could seriously sway the results of the Trinity-Spadina riding. In a minority parliament, a single MP may cast the deciding vote — as happened in May

2005 when the Layton-Martin budget amendments passed. It's apparent that the outcome of the whole Government may depend on the votes of a few individuals — possibly readers like yourself.

Both the NDP and the Liberals take credit for what they deem student-friendly platforms. The NDP highlights their role in the \$1.5 billion from the Spring 2005 budget allocated towards post-secondary education and their pledge to up PSE transfer payments to \$4 billion per annum, to be targeted at reducing tuition fees and student debt. The Liberal's have stressed their funding increases for research conducted at universities, and expanding the Canada Access Grant to students in all years of study. The Conservative Party is promising more

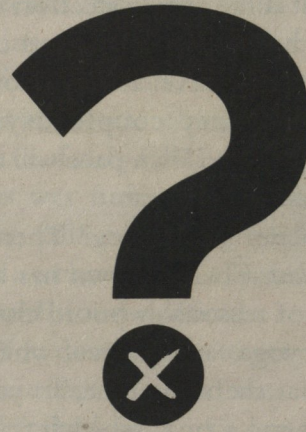
opportunities for apprenticeships and more flexible student loans.

Elections Canada wants you to vote. If you are a Canadian citizen aged 18 or over, you may already be registered to vote. If you have ever voted in a federal or provincial election before, or hold an Ontario driver's license, you will probably receive a yellow voter's card in the mail. The voter card contains all the information you need to vote. It's all you need to bring with you to the ballot box.

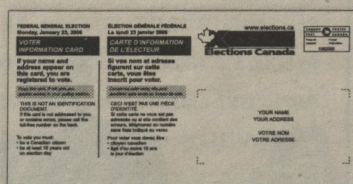
If you are not a registered voter, or you wish to vote in another riding (e.g. you no longer live in the riding you received a voter's card for), you can register in one of two ways. You can simply call Elections Canada at 1-800-463-6868 to give them updated information, or you can register on the day of voting.

To register on Election Day, you must bring photo identification, and proof of address. Proof of address can include your current address being listed on a driver's license, a lease, or a phone or utility bill with your name and address. Remember — it is your right as a citizen to vote either in your "home" riding (where your parents live and where you used to live) or your school riding, as long as you deem the riding you vote in to be your permanent residence.

Students can find more information about each political party's stance on education issues at www.voteeducation.ca. In the meantime, consider hooking up with a local candidate to help them on the campaign trail, or to get a bright sign for your window or front door!



YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE AND WHEN TO VOTE?



Voter information card

Keep the voter information card we sent you. It has all the information you'll need to vote, and you'll get through the voting process more quickly if you have it with you.

To vote, you must be a Canadian citizen and be at least 18 years old on election day.

If you haven't received your voter information card, or if you received it but found an error in your name or address, please contact your local Elections Canada office now. You'll find the telephone number at www.elections.ca by clicking on the Voter Information Service icon.

ON MONDAY, JANUARY 23, VOTE.

www.elections.ca

1 800 463-6868 toll-free in Canada and the United States
001 800 514-6868 toll-free in Mexico

TTY 1 800 361-8935 for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
toll-free in Canada and the United States or (613) 991-2082 from anywhere

