

Apathy or bad planning?

Low voter turn-out for student elections

Did you vote in the S.U. bi-elections on October? Did you even know they were on? If so, you were one of the 215 who voted out of 2700 full-time students at UPEI. This represents 8% of eligible voters.

Fall bi-elections usually have a lower voter turnout than the spring elections do. This leads people to believe that the students at UPEI are apathetic. There are other reasons, according to students.

When asked if he voted, one student said "No, I was going to but I didn't know any of the people and what they stood for." Another female student said that she never got around to it. "Besides, I didn't know when it was."

A third-year student didn't even know who

she was eligible to vote for, who the candidates were, and saw no advertising around campus, except for the polls during voting week.

UPEI's low percentage is considered "fair to good" compared to other universities, says Bruce Davison, chief returning officer. A councillor at UNB said that they usually have only 2-5% turnout for their fall elections, although this year they held a referendum in which 21-22% of students voted.

Memorial University in Newfoundland has a low turnout for their fall bi-election. They, too, had a referendum this fall and 9% of students turned out to vote. Eighteen of the thirty-two S.U. positions were won by acclamation last spring at MUN, revealing a problem

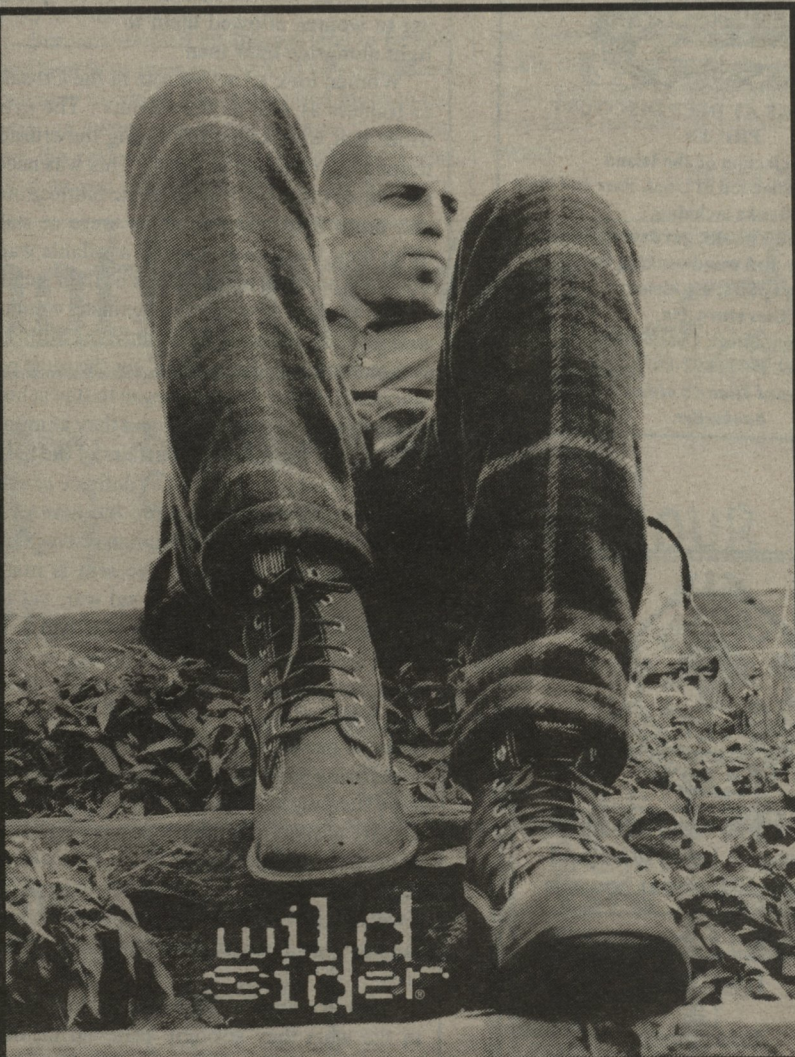
not only with voter turnout, but also with the student population's interest in running for a position with the Student Union.

UPEI also has a problem getting people to run for positions. Nominations for one more senate rep, one more arts rep, an ombudsman, and a mapus senate rep are open again.

With positions unfilled in the middle of November, it seems that students are either apathetic or ignorant of the positions' existence. That being the case, the S.U. may have to look at new ways to publicize the event so that students can get involved.

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