

Quiet general meeting in Pit

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"we don't give a [crap]!"

"We work for you," Tran later asserted, and entreated the crowd to make suggestions and participate in discussions surrounding Council and its sub-organizations.

In addition, candidates for the upcoming SU election were given the chance to speak to the crowd.

Not all of the nominees were present, and not all who attended spoke. When prompted by Tran, scattered applause by the crowd followed each speech and introduction.

Although seven people are running for the two vacant science representative positions on Council, only three candidates took a turn at the microphone. Lara Yammine, Tim Haines, and Alan McAlduff all expressed their willingness to take on the position, and indicated their affection for UPEI.

The lone Senate committee nominee, Patrick Young, urged the students present to vote. Voter turn-out in SU elections is consistently low, hovering around ten to fifteen percent.

Other candidates indicated their desire to participate in the university community, rather than simply to complain and to remain inactive. Information, or lack thereof, was also a theme in the speeches of Jason Gourley, Board of Governor's representative nominee, and Chris Gaudette, arts representative nominee.

After the speeches, Gaudette seemed particularly vehement on the need for students to be informed. He has several strategies in mind for this aim, including classroom speaking, posters, the SU notice board, the media, and others.

Gaudette also spoke about the reasons for students' lack of knowledge around relevant issues.

Some students simply do not want to be educated about SU activities and concerns, he felt. He added that often those who have knowledge constrict the flow of information.

"The Union is more important than Council," sums up Gaudette's position. Every full time student at UPEI is a member of the Union, whereas Council is a collective of this body's elected representatives.

Aside from the candidates' speeches, the General Meeting also heard brief reports given by each member of the Executive. Each gave a general orientation to her or his position, selected work summaries, and some plans for the future. Vice-President Finance Stephen Lewis delivered the report of Vice-President Operations Tyler Dougan, who was writing an exam.

Announcements were also made about an upcoming alternative calendar survey, a planned Battle of the Bands, and the Halloween Pub. A brief sketch was given about the progress of the Student Union Building project (SUB 2000).

After the general meeting, Vice-President External Stephen Hann commented on an engagement with the Provincial Minister of Education, Chester Gillan. SU President Matt Grey and Stephen Lewis were also present at this event.

Some of the topics discussed with Gillan were the cost of textbooks and tuition fees. Although the SU Executives asserted that they did not want to see a rise in tuition, they did not ask for a tuition freeze. No cuts to the university budget are expected next year, so the Union representatives felt a freeze request would be unnecessary.

The SU general meeting began shortly after 12:30 and lasted roughly half an hour. It adjourned with little fanfare and with little disruption in Pit activities.

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