

SU Bi-Election Speeches Commandeer Courtyard, People Eating Startled

by Thomas Lloyd

On Wednesday, September 24, at 12:30 in the Courtyard of the SUB, there were the candidates speeches for the upcoming Student Union Bi-Elections. In all there are 20 people running, and the majority of them had an opportunity to say one minute worth of stuff; just enough time to say who they were.

First the current SU officials gave their own speeches, followed by a quick rundown through the candidates who were in attendance. The Courtyard was fairly full, and just like the speeches last year there was a huge empty space in the middle of the room, with everyone packed off to the sides.

But after the Representative speeches were done, the big speakers came on stage. These were the guys (and gal) running for Executive Vice President. This is the position which was left vacant last year when a candidate (and winner of the election) withdrew her name after being accepted to law school. In the meantime an interim Executive VP was appointed, and now it's time for the position to go to the vote.

Three of the four people running for the position gave speeches. Jeff Grandy, Nick MacDonald, and Aimee Arsenaault were the three, (Nick Policelli did not attend) and Jeff Grandy headed off the speeches.

Jeff is in his fourth year of business at UPEI, and he wants to reduce both the tuition and the debt load of students. To do this, he wants to take a more "holistic" approach, and stated that the province continues to pour massive amounts of money into UPEI, yet tuition continues to rise. Thus students should not have to unjustly bear the financial burden of the university.

Next up was Aimee Arsenaault, who is the current interim Executive VP. Her speech was centred around lowering tuition and the fight to do so, and she was full of ideas. She described her ideas, such as building snowmen on University Avenue, and also of laying out the cost of one course in pennies. She also brought up the issue of safe walk, and also the problem of student/Student Council Representative commu-



Three of the four candidates for Executive VP

nication, and has several ideas to increase student access to their reps.

Nick MacDonald was up next, and he set out from the start with an impressive list of student activities which he's been involved in. He feels that he can take the knowledge which he has learned from across campus, and help apply it to the Executive VP position, which he believes is a position which is working and needs a high level of professionalism to work. If elected, he promised to have another wall of debt campaign, to look into the safe walk program, to fight tuition and debt load, to look into a better used-book notice board, and he also promised to reevaluate the way in which the faculty of the year is chosen.

After the speeches a series of questions came from the crowd, with most of them coming from Brandon MacKenzie. The most pointed question was on the SU's continued relationship with the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), and in my opinion Aimee and Jeff came out anti-CFS, while Nick initially made himself seem anti-CFS, but was the only one who said that there may be value to CFS.

After a few more questions, a member of the crowd asked the candidates a question which was more directed at the current SU. She stated, as I can best remember, that she had been at UPEI for ten years, and during that time she has seen the same sort of people get up and make speeches and get elected and then they do nothing. They make

promises but nothing ever gets done, and she asked what in the past ten years has the Student Union really done beside make promises and hide in their offices?

For this the Student Union President Brandon MacKenzie took the stage, and answered her question, and later on gave me (and every one in earshot) his finished response, which follows:

It is because of students like her who believe that the Student Union does nothing for them, who do nothing to get involved and seem to please themselves by bringing apathy and despair into our school that the initiatives we develop are faced with failure. I heard today from (her) that this one individual is upset at the Student Union for not effecting real change, ironically as she enjoyed a meal in the building that the Student Union lobbied for and paid to have constructed. I ask, where was she when we demanded the government

address our tuition concerns, where was she when we brought the leaders to UPEI to debate student issues, where was she when we worked so hard to present government of the day with our collective pleas - only to have so few rally in support.

We most certainly do effect real change throughout the campus. Perhaps she may consider this when she graduates and picks up a copy of the year-book prepared free of charge to her; perhaps she may think of this when she reads this issue of the Cadre or uses her student handbook to help plan her day; perhaps she may ponder if our services are there for her when she desperately needs medical coverage which our Union provides; perhaps she may remember us when she applies for a student loan and she notices that the maximum has now doubled provincially. Maybe the next time she takes a new course at UPEI she may stop to think for a moment of the time one of her peers has volunteered sitting on Senate committees, ensuring that students' opinions were heard. Perhaps as she enjoys some of the new additions to UPEI she may stop and wonder how many hours the Board of Governors students representatives had volunteered to ensure that our concerns were addressed.

Finally, perhaps she may one day wonder about everything she missed while spending her days studying at UPEI, and when she does, I hope she remembers the faces of the 20 candidates who have voluntarily added their name to the ballot - all with sincere aspirations of giving back to the campus community we all love.



Brandon tells it like it is...