

Extreme makeover needed for Students' Council



ROSS PRUSAKOWSKI

This week, Students' Council will try to appear like it's a truly representative student government. However, the upcoming by-elections on 28 and 29 September, intended to replenish Council's ranks, should be considered a miserable failure even before a single ballot has been cast, due of its inability to rouse students from their political apathy—or to make councillors realize the inherent flaw in Students' Council.

As someone who unabashedly believes that Council and the Students' Union could be effective representatives and managers of student resources, perhaps my hopes are a little high. However, as the people who decide how to spend the \$29.62 each student gives the SU every term, councillors should be at least able to drum up enough interest in Council to fill all the empty seats or at least generate some competitive races. But alas, even though they're now getting paid, this seems to be too much to ask of our elected representatives.

If all goes well after the by-election—meaning no one else resigns from Council or loses to “none of the above”—the number of elected

councillors will increase from 26 to 33 and decrease the number of vacant seats to nine. While this apparent increase in elected representatives might seem encouraging, it will still be a shameful result given that two of the largest faculties on campus—arts and education—will each have unfilled seats for the rest of the year and that the new councillors will likely receive fewer votes than the number of wins the Washington Capitals will get all season.

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Until four years ago, the by-election was a scarcely seen event, but has since become an annual one. Given such an outcome, one has to question the reasoning behind it all. If its goal is to lay bare student apathy toward Council, then it's working. Likewise, if the election is just an excuse to give the Chief Returning Officer some more experience and achieve a dollar-per-vote ratio of, say, 45-to-1, it's right on target. However,

I suspect—or at least hope—that the rationale for holding the by-election goes beyond these modest goals.

While this week's by-election will be the fourth annual—and potentially the biggest failure of the lot in terms of attracting attention and candidates—Council and students should take something more from the by-election experience. With their continual inability to fill seats, have contested races and draw more attention towards Council, it's time that councillors stopped creating flimsy scholarship motions and took a hard look at the size of Council itself.

Reducing the number of councillors and potentially changing the way they're elected—that is, by campus as a whole rather than by faculty—would make Council a less unwieldy and much more effective student government. Any move to reduce the size and structure of Council couldn't hurt, since the number of open seats has grown every year (from three in 2003 to 14 this year) and since fewer people are willing to serve on or pay attention to it.

However, until Council decides to try and makes some radical but effective changes rather than the fruitless initiatives of years past—attendance requirements, preferential balloting and councillor salaries all come to mind—the fall by-elections will continue to fail, as students finally get around to their academic pursuits and pay attention to more practical student problems.

SU a big bag of suck



VICTOR VARGAS

This may come as a shock to some, but it must be said: the Students' Union is an evil organization that is draining the life from the youth it claims to protect. It makes alliances with corporations like Coca-Cola in order to enslave the good students of campus. And by our compliance, we students contribute to this monstrosity.

It all begins with the Orwellian brain-washing exercise known as Orientation, where they advertise the idea that University will be a positive experience rather than the soul-crushing machine it needs to be to separate the chaff from the grain. Week of Welcome continues the brainwashing by trying to get people to participate in their machinations. All this propaganda is designed for one thing: to make you think you're wanted, and that it's good to help others.

The SU then begins the subversion of Darwin's law of natural selection. By offering programs such as Bearsat and the Exam Registry, students who should be working to extract our precious oil resources continue with their pitiful education that is destined to fail in the end. SUBtitles, the SU-owned used bookstore, along with various financial aid programs, allow the poor peasantry to afford knowledge that should be reserved for society's elite.

The horror continues as the SU

employs a large labour force of low-wage workers, most of whom are students desperately trying to survive. In the print centre and the decadent CUE centre, poor students waste away. But as paid employees, they're the lucky ones; those who have been sufficiently brainwashed are undertaken as volunteers for the anti-Darwinists. These deluded souls are the foot soldiers for initiatives like the Campus Food Bank and Safewalk, completely unpaid and driven only by their desire to help others.

There's only one way to stop this evil entity: we must ban it from campus. The demon known as Big Tobacco was driven out, and there are forces going against the megalomaniacal Coca-Cola Company as well. Now is the time to come together and stage a protest against the SU once and for all.

Unfortunately, no matter how we vote, we simply can't ban the Students' Union from campus. Instead, the voice of apathy must prevail, for if we do not participate in the SU and its services, they will wither away and die. It already has begun: voter turnout is down, services are going unused, and informed volunteers are becoming rarer. Bit by bit, the SU is being burdened by its own slow political process.

Even now, they foreshadow their own doom by their inability to acquire a U-Pass in a timely manner. Now's the time to show the SU how you feel: come the councillor by-elections on 28 and 29 September, let them have what comes to tyrants and refuse to vote in the election! Otherwise, regardless of whom you vote for, the Students' Union will always win.

Stand out.

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