

# Hancock urges student involvement in Tory race

CHLOÉ FEDIO  
Managing Editor

Dave Hancock, former minister of advanced education, was on campus last week, providing free food and beer to students as he discussed his campaign for leadership of the provincial Conservatives.

As he addressed a crowd of 30 at the Powerplant, one point of interest was the drawn-out postsecondary review, which began under Hancock's reign as minister. A University of Alberta alumni, Hancock resigned from his post in April to run for party leadership and was replaced by Denis Herard.

"One of the most difficult issues that I've had to face was leaving the department at the time that I did, because a lot of the work that I was pursuing wasn't complete. You don't get to choose your timing in this process," Hancock said.

After the initial January 2005 consultations aimed at making changes to the system, Premier Ralph Klein made a promise in February of the same year to create in Alberta the most affordable tuition policy in the country. In June 2005, the *A Learning Alberta* review began, headed by a 17 member Steering Committee. And though the results of the review were announced this summer, the new tuition policy has yet to be revealed.

Prior to the review, the tuition policy in Alberta stated that 30 per cent of a university's budget could be derived from tuition fees. But in May 2006, despite criticism from student groups and Opposition MLAs, the government passed Bill 40, which removed tuition policy from legislation and placed it in regulation—allowing future policies to be established without debate in the Legislature.

"It wasn't a good action, to say that we're going to have a new tuition policy so we have to get rid of the old one. The old one provided a ceiling," said Hancock, who described the bill

as "disappointing."

"I'd argued that that wasn't necessary to do because by doing that we've created a lot of distrust at a time when we really needed to build on the trust," said Hancock, who's been the MLA for Edmonton-Whitemud since 1997. "We went backwards, in my view. That took the discussion off on a different tangent, and it became a discussion about trust, rather than a discussion about progress."

Minister Herard was unavailable to comment on the criticism, but Michael Shields, director of communications at Alberta Advanced Education, said that the tuition policy is on the way.

"We're not involved in what any of the candidates are saying with regards to postsecondary education, I just need to be clear about that," Shields said. "From our perspective, it's business as usual."

The vote for the next leader of the Progressive Conservatives will occur on 25 November, and Hancock encouraged students to buy a \$5 party membership to be eligible to vote. To win, a candidate must garner more than 50 per cent of votes cast by party members, and if no single candidate receives that support, the top three will face off in a second vote on 2 December.

"If you care about what kind of a future we have in the province, you have a chance to affect that," Hancock said, adding that the next leader could stay in power for the next two years, setting the agenda for Alberta.

"Public policy is a very messy process, and it should be messy—people should be involved in it," he said. "The first stage of participation is being part of the selection of the next leader."

Eight candidates are vying for Klein's job including Ed Stelmach, Lyle Oberg, Mark Norris, Ted Morton, Jim Dinning, Victor Doerksen, Gary McPherson and Hancock. Alana Delong, the only female candidate in the race, dropped out on 11 October.



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# Delong drops from leadership fight

CATHERINE SCOTT  
News Writer

Alana Delong, who was the only female candidate running for Tory leadership, has recently withdrawn from the heated race. The loss of the only woman in the race has brought up some questions about gender roles in politics in Canada.

"I've got some very strong ideas in terms of how to move forward as a province. [But I was] struggling with the whole concept of actually being premier and I think that's actually something that I share with a lot of women. I'm very goal-oriented when it comes to accomplishing things, but not especially when it comes to power," Delong said.

Nevertheless, she insists that gender was not a deciding issue in her withdrawal. Steve Patten, associate chair for the Undergraduate Department of Political Science at the U of A, believes her to some extent, but also said that there's some foundation to the gender question. He claims that women are not taken as seriously in politics because of the way society views the role of the leader in Western society.

**"There weren't [many] serious women candidates ... that's what's really disappointing."**

**STEVE PATTEN,  
ASSOCIATE CHAIR,  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE**

"The way society [is] constructed, most men have more masculine personalities and most women have more feminine personalities. The way in which we define leadership is imbued with masculine traits about being strong and definitive ... that doesn't mean that there won't be women who are successful [in politics] and it also doesn't entirely explain [why] Alana Delong withdrew] because she



MATT FREHNER

**ALBERTA BOUND** Alana Delong, who dropped out of the Conservative leadership race, says her political career is committed to what's best for the province.

already had a reputation as a politician," Patten said.

Delong admitted that she wasn't ready for the all of the responsibility that comes with the job of premier.

"It just takes incredible energy to be premier. It's long hours and it's not easy work. Part of stepping forward as premier is essentially making a ten-year commitment, because you've got to be willing to commit to two terms," Delong stated.

Patten believes that Delong may have been persuaded to join the race because she was a woman, but regardless of her gender, he said he isn't convinced she was a strong enough candidate.

"Part of that has to do with her own strengths and weaknesses as a politician, but added to the mix for her is the gender equation. She ends up withdrawing because she can't raise the money, she can't put together the kind of campaign team that's needed—she was encouraged by some almost [like] a token woman candidate. These are the things that made it impossible for her to be successful in the end," Patten affirmed.

Patten also pointed out that though

the Progressive Conservative party has been in power for so long, there aren't many women willing to run for leadership.

"There weren't [many] serious women candidates who could really make a difference ... that's what's really disappointing," Patten said.

Delong did address the fact that there are so few women ready to take on the leadership role.

"There are some very powerful women in our caucus who would have been good contenders in this race. Of course, obvious ones are Shirley McClellan and Iris Evans—[both] extremely capable in what they've accomplished, [but] they both see themselves as moving towards the ends of their careers," Delong observed.

Delong says her vision for the province is to get things accomplished, no matter who's in power.

"My goals were goals of purpose rather than goals of power. I want this province to go in the right direction. It doesn't matter to me who is taking on the job of premier. It was not a personal goal, it was a goal for Alberta," she said.

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