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FACT: According to urbandictionary.com the verb "Fed-erline" is to latch onto someone else's money, talent and fame, while offering nothing of yourself except your (dubious) talent (in bed), to stop washing one's own hair (and possibly to stop bathing entirely), start wearing manpris, untie one's shoes and skank all over the place.

FACT: The verb "Gateway" is to latch onto a student newspaper's awesomeness, while offering less and less of your (dubious) academic talent (in university), to stop going to class (and possibly to stop studying entirely), start eating far too many RATT-burgers, playing with dinosaurs and drinking all over the place.

GATEWAY NEWS

Turning students into vagabonds since 1910.

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Forum tackles issue of sex and civics

Roundtable discussed important challenges to women in the political world

CATHERINE SCOTT
News Writer

With the departure of Alana Delong—the only female candidate—from the Alberta Progressive Conservative leadership race, and the current controversy surrounding the ongoing row between Belinda Stronach and Peter MacKay, issues of gender and politics have been on the minds of many Albertans; and a recent roundtable discussion was held at the University of Alberta to address those topics.

The event took place at Lister Conference Centre on 2 November and included appearances by City Councillor Kim Krushell, former deputy prime minister Anne McLellan, and MLAs Delong and Laurie Blakeman.

Janet Buckmaster, the coordinator for the One Woman One Vote Program which organized the event, says that it is held every three years and is timed to correspond with upcoming elections.

"The reason that we're doing this present roundtable in November 2006 is that we have municipal elections coming up in October 2007, and we're likely to have a provincial and possibly a federal election, probably within the next 18 months," Buckmaster said.

She views it as a means of support for women who are interested in running for public office. She also noted that although women make up more than

half of the country's population, they're vastly under-represented in politics.

According to Buckmaster, while women make up 52 per cent of Canada's total population, 29 per cent of the members of the House of Commons are female. The numbers are even lower in Alberta, where 15 per cent of the Legislature is made up of women despite the fact that the province's population is split nearly equally between the two genders.

"I thought what a great way to become more inspired myself, and [seeing] a group of women with like interests is encouraging."

AMY BARBER,
POLITICAL SCIENCE PHD CANDIDATE

The women in the room shared their thoughts on gender and politics and what it means to be a female in public office.

Phyllis Kobasiuk, Mayor of Parkland County, doesn't believe that gender has much to do with anybody's success in politics. She stated that whether you're a man or a woman in politics, you've got to have confidence.

"I think you feel confident by being prepared, knowing your stuff, and [being] able to understand what that community wants and expects from you," Kobasiuk said.

Backgrounds varied among the women who attended the event, but they all shared a common eagerness to speak to the elected female representatives. Topics discussed included balancing personal and public life, having a supportive spouse and how to deal with comments made by male politicians, how to get a start in politics. Political science PhD candidate Amy Barber was among those that attended the event.

"I believe strongly in issues in gender politics and increasing the number of women in politics. I thought, what a great way to become more inspired myself, and [seeing] a group of women with like interests is encouraging," Barber noted.

"You don't know that it's out there until you see something like this and feel the collective strength," she added.

The intention of the event was to provide women with support to get involved with politics. Running for office may seem like an overwhelming task for most women, but according to Barber, attending the One Woman One Vote roundtable helped make the challenge more manageable.

"It seems more tangible now," Barber affirmed.



JOSH STAAV

THREE TIMES THE FUN Wharton's book, *The Perilous Realm*, is just the first in a planned trilogy of fantasy novels.

U of A Prof's fantasy trilogy now a reality

DEREK LARSON
News Writer

Whether recounting the tales of dragons or rings, magicians or otherworldly realms, children's fantasy literature has been enjoying enormous popularity in recent years. And now University of Alberta creative writing professor Thomas Wharton will be venturing into this popular genre with his own fantasy trilogy.

Wharton has already written the first book of his trilogy, and is eagerly awaiting its 2008 publication from Doubleday Canada.

"It's called *The Perilous Realm*," Wharton said. "It's the story of a boy running away from his problems, and he finds himself in this strange world, and discovers it's the world where all the stories come from."

Wharton, an author with three published books of fiction already to his credit, 1995's *Icefields*, *Salamander* in 2001, and *Logogryph*, released just last year, found writing for the fantasy genre difficult at times.

"At a certain point I had a

manuscript, and I thought it was done," Wharton explained. But upon re-examining the book, Wharton realized that he needed to do more, and wound up incorporating several new ideas.

"They're about what I like to call the alchemy of reading. Strange things happen when a book and a reader come together."

THOMAS WHARTON,
U OF A CREATIVE WRITING PROF

Wharton, who also teaches several creative writing classes, said that he uses the energy and inspiration of his students to help with his writing.

"[Teaching] is a way for me to articulate and get back in touch with the basics of writing, because they never really change. I've written several books, but I still have to sit down

every day, and face the page, and make decisions ... and that's a thing that any writer, whether they're a beginning writer or not always faces," Wharton said.

Wharton went on to say that much of his inspiration for the craft comes from his students.

"They're really full of energy about writing. They're really committed to it, and they're interested in it," he said.

Wharton explained that he has wanted to write a fantasy story since he was a child, and, now that he has children of his own, he has the desire to write something that they can read.

His love of fantasy even surfaced in some of his previous books of fiction, including *Salamander*, about a printer in the 18th Century trying to print an infinite book, and *Logogryph*, a collection of short stories about reading.

"They're about what I like to call the alchemy of reading," Wharton said. "Strange things happen when a book and a reader come together," Wharton said.