Tory candidates talk gov't accountability

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News Writer

Provincial Tory leadership hopefuls met Monday night at an all-candidates' forum, to answer questions posed by audience members—including the question of government responsibility. Each of the eight candidates was given the opportunity to answer the question of what they would do to demonstrate open and accountable government as premier of the province.

When leadership hopeful Gary McPherson was questioned how he would demonstrate open and accountable government as premier of the province, he called for the end to public information requests.

"I would probably get rid of the Freedom of Information Act, because it's only made governments more secretive," McPherson said, however he didn't elaborate further.

Alternately, Lyle Oberg felt that access to information was necessary to ensure accountability in government. He stood by his Blueprint for Alberta policy, in which he promises to place a cap on the premiers' time in office, as well as a whistleblowers' protection act and measures to hold accountable those MLAs who cross the floor.

"A whistleblowers' protection act ... access to information, ministerial travel, crossing the floor—all of these things have to have regulations to continue to have an open and accountable, transparent, credible government in Alberta," he said.

Fixed election dates and a ten-year term limit for premiers were mentioned by Ted Morton. He said that these measures would prevent premiers from being in office for extended periods of time.

In regards to accountability, Mark Norris went on the offensive by demanding that the other candidates release their list of campaign donors and sponsors, as he has done. To this challenge, one candidate, Victor Doerkson, replied that he had made a campaign promise to his donors not to reveal them until after the election.

Transparency with regard to lobby groups, including a lobbyist registry, was an idea proposed by Dave Hancock.

The winner of the leadership race will take over as premier until the next provincial elections. The election will take place November 25th, and while only Conservative party members are eligible to vote, memberships can be bought up to election day.

'Net expertise questioned

Critics say Citizendium isn't convincingly credible

Amanda Henry, Students' Union Vice-President (Academic), echoed concerns surrounding the use of Citizendium as an academic source.

"I would still hesitate strongly about using [either Wikipedia or Citizendium] as source material. They may be able to eliminate some of the inaccuracies that people can say on Wikipedia ... but even if it's more accurate, it's still a changeable source."

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>
> DEBORAH EERKES,
> DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF
> STUDENT JUDICIAL AFFAIRS

"[T]here is no way of verifying the research that went into the source or the methodology or even the reputation of the writer," Henry added.

Citizendium is considered a branch of Wikipedia, as it will use all of the site's existing articles but perform the arduous process of editing them during a closed, invitation-only period. This is possible due to the fact that all content on Wikipedia is considered open-source under its licence. The procedure of mirroring articles from Wikipedia and editing them has recently begun by sending invitations to specialists as well as taking applications to be members of the community.

But a major area of contention that remains is that Sanger has yet to define what will constitute an "expert voice" in the Citizendium community.

"The problem is that these intellectuals are self-identifying and who of us doesn't like to think that we're an intellectual? The open culture is the problem with this," Eerkes said.

Both Eerkes and Henry agreed that not all Internet-based research is questionable, but that it must not replace more academic methods. Instead, they said, students should be using all of the resources provided to them by the University, including books, libraries resources and peer-reviewed journals.

"Internet sourcing is great and useful and convenient and an easy way to get a lot of information in a very short amount of time, but part of the point of a research paper is to teach students about research methods," Henry said. "I would really hate to see that lost."

STREETERS

OJ Simpson's new book, *OJ Simpson: If I Did It, Here's How It Happened*, on how he would have committed the murders of Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman, is being released on 30 November.

If you did it, how would it happen?

Amanda Duncan
Master's
Anthropology III

Alex Harcott
Arts II

Mike Rivest
Business IV

Chris Bourque
Engineering II

I don't think I would have done what he did. [Maybe] poison? Because it's not gory or horrible or bloody, you can just do away with them quickly and get rid of the evidence. I would have killed them as painlessly as possible.

I would have at least planned it out, made it seem less obvious. Some sort of accident, like from *Seinfeld*, when George's fiancée is poisoned [by licking the envelopes].

He got away with it didn't he? If he did do it, that's how I would have done it too.

I would have put something in the drink, and got her to drink it. Just snuck it in there without her seeing it. Something that would be slow and that you wouldn't notice it for a few days, until all of a sudden, [click noise], gone.

Compiled and photographed by Mike Otto and Matt Frehner