

THE GATEWAY

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ASHLEY SCARLETT

I'M GETTING A MIGHT QUEASY International Week ended with a bang with the concert held Friday night. Audiences were treated to feats of daring gymnastics courtesy of Edmonton's Firefly Theatre. See our feature on page 11 for more photos from the event, including some sexy Latin tango, the drums of Edmonton-based Kita No Taiko, and the lyrical gymnastics of Kinnie Starr.

New face for SU elections

Facebook gives candidates new way to be seen, but raises questions about precampaigning rules

CHLOÉ FEDIO
Managing Editor

Though there are no official candidates until the nominations close on 15 February, the annual Students' Union Executive elections are already in full swing—not on the ground but in the virtual world of Facebook.

To date, at least six students have declared themselves as candidates online and created groups to which others can join in support of their campaign.

Rachel Woynorowski, the SU's Chief Returning Officer, explained that until the nomination deadline "it's fair game for anyone to do anything," as no one is an official candidate until that time.

"For now, it's all still kosher. To be honest, I kind of like it," Woynorowski said, saying that it encourages student participation in the election.

After candidates are confirmed, Woynorowski explained that they can begin spending their campaign budget—\$550 for each candidate, and \$366.67 for joke candidates—but formal campaigning isn't allowed until Monday, 26 February. She said that most people use the reading week break to design and print their posters, and to create websites and banners, and hopes that Facebook will help students organize their campaigns.

"I'm glad candidates are out

there and thinking about recruiting volunteers and getting stuff done in advance. Because that way, when the campaign does start they're going to be ready and they're not going to scrambling over reading week to put [everything] together," she added.

Still, she was clear that once candidates are confirmed, the Facebook groups that support particular candidates will have to go.

"Up until the nomination deadline, anyone can do it," Woynorowski said of the Facebook groups. "After the nomination deadline, everything magically disappears. It's all going to come down until the campaign starts.

I'm not 100 per cent sure how I'm dealing with Facebook yet," she added.

A number of students have declared their candidacy via Facebook, including two for president and four for various vice-presidential positions. In addition, there are groups created by another person to encouraging others join the race, and one group created by to a student who withdrew his nomination package.

Woynorowski said that last year 6051 ballots were cast in the SU elections, which accounts for 21.3 per cent of undergraduate students. She hopes that Facebook will help generate enthusiasm for student politics and draw out a larger number of voters this year.

I-Week panel probes Canada's place in Afghanistan conflict

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

The image of woman in a blue burqa kneeling on the ground while a member of the Taliban holds a rifle to her head fills the projector screen behind Captain Peter Avis as he begins to explain why the Canadian military is in Afghanistan.

Avis, who was on campus last Friday for a panel discussion on the role of Canada's military as part of the University of Alberta's International Week, remained adamant that, despite criticism in the media and political divides, the mission is "the right thing to do."

"I think we have to ask ourselves [if we are] willing to have the Taliban scourging the Afghan people or starting a civil war if we or the other NATO countries are not there," Avis said, noting that over the last 25 years more than two million people have been killed in Afghanistan.

"The country is in shatters and cannot break out of the circle of ineffective governments without help," he added.

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, Canada has steadily increased its military presence in the country, and in May 2006, Parliament voted 149–145 in favour of extending the length

of Canada's mission in Afghanistan for two years longer than had been previously planned.

However, Lauryn Oates, who has spent eleven years working on the issue of women's rights in Afghanistan, namely with the organization Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan, stressed that though she supports the military mission, it contains too many "missing pieces."

"The country is in shatters and cannot break out of the circle of ineffective governments without help."

**CAPTAIN PETER AVIS,
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL
DEFENCE**

"The three Ds policy: development, diplomacy and defense are very interconnected and we really have to broaden the debate in Canada to focus on all three of those areas rather than constantly focusing on the military," Oates said, pointing to the fact that most of the debate in Canada has centred around clarity of the mission's

objectives, Canada's relationship with the American forces post-9/11, the cost in tax payer dollars, and above all, those people who have lost their lives in the conflict.

However, Oates reiterated Avis' warning of the dire consequences pulling out of Afghanistan would have.

"Were they to pull out of the south [of Afghanistan] there would be a civil war. And I believe this firmly. Afghanistan is not ready to stand on its own feet," Oates said. "I do support the mission on the ground ... but I think we do need to be constantly looking at how we can improve and do better," he said.

Oates stressed that in order to allow Afghans to enjoy human rights, dignity, security of person and basic quality of life, there needs to be a military presence.

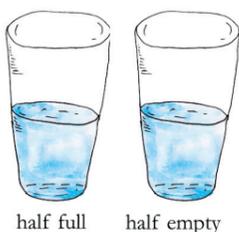
"It became very obvious to me through my work that we must have security to do development work," Oates said, pointing to various examples, such as the fact that farmers' fields need to be clear of landmines before farmers can participate in the economy.

She also gave the example of repairing roads, which need to be safe for kids to go to school or adults to go to work.

PLEASE SEE MILITARY ♦ PAGE 2

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Can you tap that?

With growing populations and increased pollution, we could be on the verge of a global water crisis.

FEATURE, PAGE 12



Em-Bear-assing Loss

Lethbridge came to town and took a pair from the Bears hockey team, their first wins at the Drake since '99.

SPORTS, PAGE 14