

VPSL candidate sees past WoW and antifreeze

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Online Coordinator

This year's offerings in most sections of Students' Union elections are pretty slim and Vice-President (Student Life) is no different. Fourth-year science student Christopher Le is running uncontested, save for the joke candidate Chubby Puff Ball. Still, we put Le through the obligatory gauntlet of questions.

1 The VPSL portfolio pertains to non-academic issues. What does this mean to you?

Christopher Le: First, I think dealing a lot with the campus community and the campus experience for students; the things that don't deal with the classroom and the textbooks and the lectures. Another part of it is dealing with the advocacy for the students; so representing students in matters that are non-academic in nature. For example, the biggest thing I see for this coming year is mandatory non-instructional fees. That's a lot of what I think will be taking up the VPSL portfolio, in addition to the campus environment experience.

2 In any given year, the VPSL needs to provide leadership in non-academic advocacy, services and programming. What would you bring to the table in each area?

Le: First, with non-academic advocacy, we really need to make sure we have student input and accountability regarding those mandatory non-instructional fees. The current VPSL, Omer Yusuf, has done a lot of really

good work bringing up those sorts of issues and starting a dialogue with certain groups. I guess part of the nature of these portfolios is that they're only one year, but I've talked with [Yusuf] and I've talked with a lot of different people and it's just something that I would like to continue and make sure that we have student input and an understanding of what's going on with these issues.

Regarding programming, I'm a product of some of this campus programming. I've been involved with Orientation, Week of Welcome, Anti-Freeze. I think, historically, the associate VPSL handles this sort of stuff so I will definitely be there to provide him with support and leadership. But programming, how we have it, is pretty good.

The last one, services, is a really important thing for the VPSL. The University is a large, research-intensive commuter campus. It can be very big and very daunting, and the Students' Union tries its best to provide services for the students. Really what I want to do is highlight student engagement. We have a lot of stuff available on campus. We have over 300 student groups—one of the largest amounts of all Canadian universities and it's something to be proud of. But sometimes students come and they're just, "Okay, I've got to go to school; I've got to start right away." And really what I hope to do is encourage that engagement. That's part of what I plan on doing behind the scenes, working with service directors and maybe even with faculty associations even though that's part of the [VP] Academic portfolio. Really, just help give them a bit of definition and a bit of structure and tell them that they can really reach out to students here.



MATT FREHNER

HE'S HAPPY IF YOU'RE HAPPY Would-be VPSL Chris Le says if students are enjoying campus life, he'd be doing his job.

3 This year, student space on campus has been a big issue. How would you like to see the University create more spaces and what would you do to help?

Le: Student space is one of those things that everyone wants, right? So it's definitely something that's really big and I know that there are talks underway right now just to evaluate how the issue of student space is going. It's definitely something that's needed and everyone is competing for the space. I really want to be able to provide that student input and say, "We need this."

The space is really necessary for people to come to get involved and get engaged. If they don't have the

space to relax, to study, to work, then people aren't going to want to be here and they aren't going to get involved on campus. So student space is really important to the broader student experience.

4 Aside from Week of Welcome and Anti-Freeze, VPSL is often looked at as the black sheep of executive positions. What would you do to try to change that perception?

Le: You're right; it's a bit tough being that those are the really high-profile events. Part of what I want to do is help promote student engagement. I'm not too sure how necessary it would be for me to have that face time, but what I'd

like to bring is that [underlying sense of campus community] forward; to have students want to be on campus and want to be a part of campus. That doesn't mean I have to be out there and in your face, "This is Chris Le! VPSL!" But as long as people are thinking, "Hey, it might be fun to get involved. I want to be part of campus," that would be enough for me.

5 You have 5 minutes to, in haiku form, let students know what you should be elected.

Le:
Join a student group
Bring down mandatory fees
Enjoy campus life.

gateway literary contest

categories:

- 1 Short Fiction (under 1500 words)
- 2 Really Short Fiction (under 150 words)
- 3 Haiku
- 4 Sonnet
- 5 Limerick
- 6 Photography

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