

THE GATEWAY

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contributors

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Diverse platforms mark race for SU President



MICHAL MLYNARZ

SHELL GAME On March 7-8, voters will get to decide whether Janz (left), Henry or Lawrence will get to don the shiny SU crown. (Note: no actual crown exists.)

MARIA KOTOVYCH
News Staff

The race for Students' Union President is underway with six candidates this year up for the challenge—three of whom are joke candidates. The three real candidates are: Amanda Henry, current Vice-President (Academic); Michael Janz, current Lister Hall Students' Association President; and Cody Lawrence, Intramurals coordinator with the former Arts Students Association.

1 What is the main thing you would want to accomplish as President?

Amanda Henry: As President, I would like to sort of refocus our affordability and accessibility messaging, because there's a new provincial government and the University has a new vision for a great university. I think we have a really great opportunity to start advocating not only for more affordable education, but to start filling the gaps in quality that the institution has started to see since the cuts in the '90s. I think they're all tied to the education you get here is easier to get because you don't have to carry as much debt—it's more likely that those other things will improve, too.

Michael Janz: As President, the main thing I'd like to accomplish is making sure that the SU has a broader vision than just tuition advocacy. I want to make sure that some of the other portfolios in this organization, such as our businesses and our services and our building, aren't neglected. [Students are] concerned [as to] why the SU for five years [is] running a business that's been losing money almost to the tune of half-a-million dollars, but we haven't seen presidential candidates sort of talking about these issues. We always talk about tuition advocacy, but these [internal issues] are just as important to

our organization as the external issues.

Cody Lawrence: A serious increase in the amount of things that are actually wanted by the students. There's a lot of concern for things like microwaves and student spaces, student spaces just to study in, access to materials needed—photocopiers, wireless Internet, all that kind of thing—and for some reason, these things have been backbenched for the last two or three years now, much to the frustration to a lot of students I've talked to, anyways.

2 What issues would you prioritize when dealing with the Administration and the provincial government?

Henry: The province and the University are listening with different ears. To the University, my main messages would be educational quality—the University needs to be making direct investments into undergraduate education. For instance, making sure that they do hire 500 new professors. The provincial government doesn't have quite the ground-level view of the University, so my priorities to them would be funding university to make it more acceptable for more qualified students and making sure ... that it's designed to improve the experience here, that the provincial government provides it with that in mind.

Janz: I would make sure that the issues we're looking at are, well, that we take sort of a practical approach. I mean, we've been asking for a tuition rollback last year and that hasn't happened. And I think one issue that we need to take on is student loans. We haven't had this as the main focus of our advocacy efforts. So I just want to make sure that we start tackling issues at the SU that are important to students that are more winnable. **Lawrence:** I would say, obviously the

most pressing issue is tuition, as usual, and presenting that is a matter of showing what we've done in the past, the cry for it right now, and what we're currently doing to keep up with it.

3 What does the number of joke candidates say about perceptions of the SU?

Henry: I'm actually really glad to see the joke candidates, because it means that more students are getting involved with the SU. A lot of the joke candidates are students who wouldn't normally be involved in the SU election race, so I actually thought it was really positive to see students getting interested.

Janz: I think joke candidates serve a good purpose [in] that they're spreading awareness about the vote, that they're getting students talking about the election. I think it shows that we have to remember that, at the end of the day, this is still student politics, it still can be fun.

Lawrence: It's actually a welcomed change. I like to see that there are people who are taking—I'd say not as much of a comical jest at being President—but definitely trying to get more people involved for sure.

4 How would you work with the different vice-presidents on their portfolios?

Henry: The vice-presidents would be taking their own lead on their portfolios. I think a really important part of the President's job is to make sure that the vision of the Executive as a whole coordinates, but without sort of leading the vice-presidents around by the ear. I would hope ... we can set up a dynamic where they listen when I put my foot down, but that they feel comfortable

pursuing their own visions, because everyone's elected on their own platform, and has their own contribution to give to the organization.

Janz: I think the President's overall responsibility is setting the direction of the organization and I think that's something I'll be able to do very well from my previous experience as President of the Lister Hall Students' Association. I had to be responsible for setting the direction for what we were going to do as an Executive. I think one of the dangers is sometimes for an SU President, if they came from a certain background, they would retain that portfolio too much. The President needs to allow the VPs the flexibility to do what they want with their portfolios.

Lawrence: Well, I've talked to a lot of these guys in the last week or so, and they all have some pretty interesting points concerning their materials and what they've had to say. I think actually everything would run together really smoothly if certain people [whose platforms I've looked at] would get into office.

5 In five minutes or less, write a haiku on why you should be elected.

Henry:
If I'm elected
No poetry will students hear
No haikus. Indeed.

Janz:
Students are shouting
It's time we offered results
Time for new vision.

Lawrence:
Wants go unanswered
You ought to get what you need
Vote Cody for Change.

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