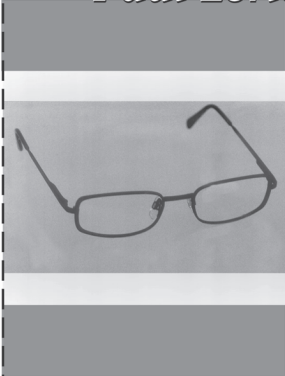



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# Elections need to kick it up a notch



TYSON DURST

People often come up to me in the street and say, “Mr Durst, our democratic system is flawed, and the level of participation by its citizenry troubles me—how would you go about fighting apathy and disillusionment?” to which I reply, “I’m glad you asked, random stranger who beat the astronomical odds of guessing my name correctly; after nearly falling into a coma watching the Alberta Provincial Leaders Debate, I think I might have some ways to liven up the democratic process.”

First of all, if the *Idol* series have taught us anything, it’s that singing competitions will get people out voting and participating in droves, and that they’ll gladly pay the associated fees. Clearly, a sing-off is needed as a component of the debates, complete with annoying host and sarcastic judges.

Another disconcerting trend is the young people with their iPods, iPods, videogames, and bubble gum not

giving much of a hoot about politics and voting. The solution here: a videogame competition sponsored by the three major game console powers—Microsoft, Sony, and Nintendo. A *Guitar Hero* challenge is a given in this part of the debate. I don’t really give a shit how you’re going to fix Alberta’s healthcare crisis, Kevin Taft; I want to see how many successive combos you can put together while rocking out to some Aerosmith. You may be a superstar in the legislature, but are you a superstar where it really counts—on Expert? Additional rockstar moves like head thrashing and karate kicks should also be considered for bonus style points when grading the performance.

I have no idea why people are wired this way, but we also like our sex and violence. How can politicians tap into these seemingly insatiable desires? By demonstrating that they’re the most sexy and most violent candidate at the table. The sexy part could be established with wet T-shirt contests and bikini walk-offs—keeping in mind that the party leaders are all male. Brian Mason may want to address issues like affordable housing, but I want to see how he addresses his wet, far-left man-tits while strutting on stage in a Borat-style thong with suspenders. Enough of all this hiding

behind stiff suits, I say—let your ideas hang out.

As for adding some violence and danger, it’s as easy as mixed martial arts. Sure, you can stand around using rhetoric and statistics to take down your opponents, but you can also take down your opponents with a swift knee to the face followed up by a punishing elbow to the spine. If you’re not willing to severely injure or kill your political enemies in a tournament of *Mortal Kombat*, I think we all have to question that person’s commitment to their platform and whether they can truly deliver bold leadership.

These are but a few of the suggestions that I have for strengthening the pillars of democracy—I haven’t even touched on attack ads and how we need more of them with higher production values. Whispering, “Ed Stelmach has no plan” ominously in the background of an ad is all well and good, but why not superimpose his face onto the *Cloverfield* monster for some added effect?

I think Albertans are tired of half-assed approaches to manipulating the truth, outright lying, and other tactics that are a cornerstone of our democracy. It’s time to roll up our sleeves and do better. It’s time for change that works for bloodthirsty Albertans like me.

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**GFC COMMITTEES: STUDENTS NEEDED**

The terms of office for students serving on **General Faculties Council (GFC)** Standing Committees, Appeal Boards and committees to which GFC elects members will expire on April 30, 2008. Undergraduate and graduate students (as noted) are encouraged to apply now to serve on any of the following committees for terms of office beginning May 1, 2008 and ending April 30, 2009. (Some students currently serving on these committees may be seeking re-election to serve additional terms.)

Committee	Student Vacancies	Meeting Times (monthly)
<b>ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (APC):</b> GFC's senior committee dealing with academic, financial and planning issues.	ONE undergraduate & ONE graduate	2:00 pm / 2nd & 4th Wednesdays
<b>ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE (ASC):</b> GFC committee dealing with admissions, academic standing, transfer and examination policies and other related issues.	ONE undergraduate	9:00 am / 3rd Thursday
<b>CAMPUS LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE (CLRC):</b> Reviews Code of Student Behaviour, Code of Applicant Behaviour and Residence Community Standards.	TWO students (undergraduate and/or graduate)	9:30 am / last Thursday
<b>COMMITTEE ON THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (CLE):</b> Promotes an optimal learning environment in alignment with guiding documents of the University of Alberta.	ONE undergraduate & ONE graduate	2:00 pm / 1st Wednesday
<b>FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (FDC):</b> Recommends on planning and use of facilities, proposed buildings, and parking and transportation facilities.	ONE undergraduate	1:30 pm / 4th Tuesday
<b>UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE (UASC):</b> Approves new awards for undergraduate students including selection and eligibility criteria.	TWO undergraduates	2:00 pm / 2nd Tuesday in October, March and June  4th Tuesday in January
<b>UNIVERSITY TEACHING AWARDS COMMITTEE (UTAC):</b> Adjudicates the Rutherford Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, the William Hardy Alexander Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, the Provost's Award for Early Achievement of Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the Teaching Unit Award.	TWO undergraduates & ONE graduate	Normally three times a year (October, March and May)
<b>ACADEMIC APPEALS COMMITTEE (AAC) / UNIVERSITY APPEAL BOARD (UAB):</b> AAC hears and decides student appeals regarding academic standing. UAB hears and decides student appeals regarding disciplinary decisions of the Discipline Officer and/or Dean as made under the Code of Student Behaviour.	AAC: TWO under- graduates & TWO graduates  UAB: FIVE under-graduates & FIVE graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students will normally participate in 3 to 4 hearings per year.</li><li>Hearings are scheduled as needed Monday to Thursday;</li><li>Hearings normally start at 4:30 or 5:00 PM, and last 3 to 5 hours.</li></ul> Students should have flexible evening schedules two nights a week (including summer months).
<b>COUNCIL ON STUDENT AFFAIRS (COSA):</b> The aim of the Council is the betterment of the quality of student life at the University of Alberta. (Open only to current members of GFC.)	ONE undergraduate & ONE graduate	Afternoons/normally 3rd Monday (September to March)

Application forms and committee information are available on the University Governance website: <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/secretariat/> or in Room 2-5 University Hall. Applications should be completed and returned to University Governance **by Wednesday, March 5, 2008**. For information regarding committee membership and terms of reference, students are invited to contact: Ms Vanessa Ogilvy, Secretary to the GFC Nominating Committee (NC), at 492-4715, or by e-mail: [vanessa.ogilvy@ualberta.ca](mailto:vanessa.ogilvy@ualberta.ca).

NOTE: There is ONE STUDENT VACANCY on the GFC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE for an undergraduate student who is a GFC member for the 2008-09 academic year. Expressions of interest for this position should be directed to Mr Garry Bodnar ([garry.bodnar@ualberta.ca](mailto:garry.bodnar@ualberta.ca)), Secretary to the GFC Replenishment Committee, University Governance.

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**STUDENTS' UNION ELECTION 2008**  
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