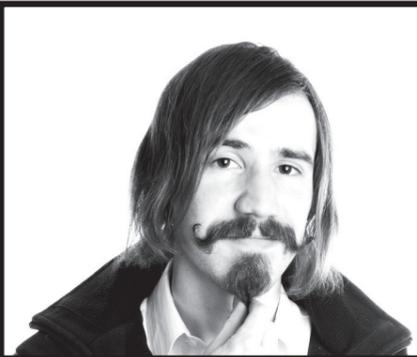


THE PANELLISTS



Vice-president (External) in 2006/07, **DAVE COURNOYER** was instrumental in getting the U-Pass in the hands of U of A students. He also served as an Arts councillor in 2007/08, but resigned at the end of August. He's currently a prominent Alberta blogger and isn't just some obscure fat frat boy with a sticky-up haircut.



A Science councillor from 2003/04 to 2004/05, and again in 2006/07, **JUSTIN KEHOE** also served as vice-president (Student Life) in 2005/06. The competitive nature of the VPSL race this year made him a strong voice for our panel. He currently holds the unofficial title of VPMA: vice-president (Mustache Aficionado).



STEVE KIRKHAM served as Science councillor from 2003/04 to 2005/06, and made an unsuccessful bid for the presidency in 2006. He has also run several referendum and plebiscite campaigns. As well, he invented frigg'in' Bear Scat; have you heard of it?



SAM POWER had a long tenure on the SU, most notably as vice-president (External) in 2005/06 and President in 2006/07. She's currently the news director at CJSR and a member of the radical cheerleaders, if that carries any clout. (Note: it doesn't).

election dissection

SU EDITION

Haven't made up your mind on who to vote for in the Students' Union elections? The *Gateway* sits down with a distinguished panel of former Students' Union councillors and executive members to find out who they believe is competent, who isn't, and what the big deal is about all these "issues" you keep hearing about.

by RYAN HEISE

PHOTOS BY SAM BROOKS, MIKE OTTO,
TARA STIEGLITZ, AND KRISTINA SULATYCKI

THE ISSUES

Vote or die—but why?

Perhaps the biggest issue surrounding this year's election is that there are no real issues. Unlike the U-Pass and Coke questions last year, there are no referenda on this year's ballot. Steve Kirkham thinks that this may decrease voter turnout by as much as 50 per cent this year.

"When was the last time we didn't have a plebiscite or referendum on the ballot? Not in my time," he said.

"I don't think any of the candidates are giving students a reason to get out and vote," Cournoyer added.

Power didn't think that the drop in voter turnout would be as large as Kirkham stated, but said an issue like joining a federal advocacy group such as CASA should definitely go to a referendum.

Overall, the resounding stance of the panel was that turnout would be down.

Surely you jest

As *Gateway* business manager and resident SU hack Steve Smith said when the final list of candidates was announced, "One joke candidate is the perfect amount." This year, only

the/future is contending the presidency, and has so far ran a fairly invisible campaign. The panel had a simple explanation for this: joke candidates of recent memory have sucked.

"When I think of Pepsi and Tom Selleck, it's been kind of lacking for the last couple of years," Power said. "I think there should be more joke candidates. I think they heighten the tension and the debate and just make elections fun."

Samuel snafu

A topic all of the panel was eager to discuss was the question of whether not the current situation surrounding Bobby Samuel should be taken into consideration by students when heading to the polls. The emphatic response was "yes."

"It does reflect on what kind of president you would be when you're in office and the types of decisions you'd make [and] the reasons why you would make them," Power said. "He should have the right to run, but I do think students should really take into account what he's done."

Kirkham called it a "lack of common sense," which was echoed by the rest of the panel, but Kehoe added that other candidates shouldn't be dragging it out.

THE RACES

Presidential predictions

While the presidential contention was initially heralded by many as a two-horse race between Janelle Morin and Bobby Samuel, the panel was quick to point out that Dustin Miller should be strongly considered by students.

"Having no background in the Students' Union, he comes across as quite intelligent, quite strong," Kehoe said of Miller, while adding that he has yet to deviate from his speeches during the forums.

"He's the only one who's really presenting a vision of the Students' Union that's anything to get excited about," Cournoyer noted, adding that the other candidates were primarily "incrementalists."

Kehoe also said that Miller's presence has upped the debate and level of discourse on issues in the presidential race.

Still, much of the presidential discussion fell to Samuel and Morin.

When discussing the former's platform, Kirkham asked, "If he had all of these great ideas, why didn't he implement them in his year as Vice-President (Academic)? Why is he now focusing moreso on the academic portfolio when he's running for president and never got anything done during his year as VPA?"

Kehoe added that he felt much of Samuel's platform is regressive.

"He's talking about bringing students-at-large to committees of Students' Council, to bring back these dedicated seats for different groups, and I just think these are things that the Students' Union used to do years ago—maybe when somebody's brother was president, I don't know—but it seems like he's talking about going backwards in a few ways."

Power felt uneasy with aspects of both Morin's and Samuel's platforms.

"I feel uncomfortable with any statements that say, 'I would like to build a strong relationship with the government or the University,' " she said. "I don't know what that means; I don't know what that accomplishes. The University is not on our side; they have a different agenda, and it's unfortunate when student leaders don't recognize that difference."

Cournoyer, Power, and Kirkham all noted that the two platforms have a lot of similarities, but that they are all failing to address PSE issues in any public way.

"When the SU president speaks, people listen. Media love printing stuff from an SU president, and students need to be cognizant about that fact when casting their vote, and candidates also have to be cognizant of that fact when they're coming up with their platform. I'm not sure if the two front-runners have really hit on those points," Kirkham said.

Cournoyer also raised another important point in that