

SU prez-elect ready to take office

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News Staff

It's been a busy week for Janelle Morin. After her bid for the position of Students' Union president proved successful last Thursday, she's already seeing her calendar fill up and her name recognition increase across campus.

"It's a different paradigm for sure. I definitely think of myself as an ordinary student who sees a lot of potential in our campus and really feels strongly about certain issues," Morin says.

Currently the director of Student Group Services (SGS), Morin was elected to the presidency last Thursday, receiving 2082 out of 3989 ballots cast, or 52 per cent of the popular vote.

Attributing much of her success on the campaign trail to her team of 110 committed volunteers—including campaign manager Peter Ochs, President of the Resident Halls Association this year—Morin stresses the need to continue to meet with and engage students on a regular basis.

"I feel like we ran a very clean campaign, and I'm very proud of that, and I also feel like we had a very intelligent and very supportive group of volunteers," Morin explains.

"It was very interesting to have the opportunity to meet with so many students. I think it's something that the Students' Union needs a lot more of," she says. "We need a lot more engagement with our student body—there are a lot of people with a lot of good ideas."

But according to Morin, the real work begins now. She has already begun the necessary preparation to take over the reigns from outgoing SU President Michael Janz on 1 May.

"The focus on the transitional period right now will be for me to A) set priorities, to B) figure out the mechanics of the organization, and to C) work on having really solid background information from the current executive," she explains.

When she begins her tenure in



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THERE'S MORIN IN STORE Janelle looks forward to starting her term.

office, Morin believes her biggest priority will be pressuring the new provincial government to see post-secondary education as a greater concern.

"[We need to ensure] that we really get our message out to the new government. I think that's going to be hugely crucial for us," she notes. "We need to make sure we have a really solid and really consistent message, and we really need them to be prioritizing students because I think that prioritizing education isn't enough—it's prioritizing education in a way that benefits the student."

On a more internal note, Morin hopes to continue advancing the advocacy issues centred around quality and affordability that the SU faces on a yearly basis. She singled out plans to act on pushing for minimum standards on teacher evaluations and smaller student-to-teacher ratios, as well as a push for greater support from the university administration for student groups and services.

Morin anticipates that herself and her fellow executive members will be busy next year dealing with the renegotiation of the Aramark contract, further efforts to provide

affordable housing, and the ongoing battle to lower the cost of tuition and academic materials.

She also believes that the best approach to dealing with these issues comes from the grassroots.

"It's taking the ideas of students [...] and seeing how we as the Students' Union can support those ideas," Morin emphasizes. "I think that's our key role."

Hailing from Fort Saskatchewan, Morin has been previously involved with the Residence Halls Association, the Lister Hall Students' Association, and the Ignite social justice group. She is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in English.

As for next year, the 2008/09 SU President said she will use her past experiences to help best represent and speak on behalf of undergraduate students at the U of A.

"I plan to do a lot of the same things that I've already been doing in terms of student issues that I feel passionate about. Hopefully now I'll have some of the political capital to be able to achieve some of those goals that I've had for a long time and that I hope—and I think the election is evidence of this—a lot of other students share," Morin observes.

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Credit card usage benefits students—Janz

SU Prez says removal of payment option takes away a popular convenience

PAYMENT • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

However, Clark said consultation had taken place, and based on those discussions, the decision was made to hold off until 1 July, 2008 to officially do away with accepting credit card payments.

"That's why we're starting now with a deadline that's at the beginning of next academic year: because the students when we were doing the consultation pointed out [that] there needs to be lots of lead time for communication. Took to point, it cost us money, but still, it's worthwhile making sure that we tell everybody in an orderly way what's happening," she said.

But telling, rather than consulting, seems to be the descriptor student leaders are using to describe those discussions.

"Essentially, those meetings were set up to just inform us that this was going to be the case, not to get our opinion on whether or not to go ahead with it," Charchun said. She added that since the announcement, the initial feedback from students has been negative.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: SAMBROOKS

BYEBYE AIR MILES You're going to have to scrounge up quite a bit of change.

Janz further stressed that for the 18 000 students who pay by credit cards, they are unlikely to be swayed by the University's assurances that this \$1.3 million will be used for their benefit.

"If you pay tuition for four years by credit card, you've got enough Air Miles to go to Europe," Janz pointed out.

"I think it's the University taking away a convenience and downloading extra costs to the students."

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