



AMS Elections Guide



An informed, progressive viewpoint on the AMS Elections

Message From the Editors

The Knoll are progressives seeking democratic reform at the university. In this *Guide*, editors have evaluated student candidates for the present AMS Executive races, Board of Governors and Senate elections. We've written a short essay to collect our own positions on university and student politics, and will refer to it as a platform against which to measure candidates. Our numbers on the editorial board are modest, so not all candidates have gotten attention. As a rule, profiled candidates 1) are front-runners, 2) are endorsed by *The Knoll*. You can begin voting online from now until January 29th. Ballot voting is on Jan31st.

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The Knoll Endorses

President: Jeff Friedrich

VP Academic: Brendon Goodmurphy

VP External: Joel Kozwarski

VP Administration: Liz Ferris (No longer running)

VP Finance: Brittany Tyson

Board of Governors: Jeff Friedrich and Tristan Markle

Senate: Tariq Ahmed, Jaspreet Khangura, Alfie Lee

The Knoll's Platform

Universities have long been valued as institutions for independent social criticism and research, as well as centers of culture and experimentation. The academic tenure system, which protects potentially dissenting, heterodox and socially “dangerous” professors from dismissal, is a testament to the acknowledged importance of academic independence and freedom. However, as has become increasingly apparent, more than the tenure system is required to ensure that universities are able to function. As a broad phenomenon, corporatization has undermined the autonomy and public nature of the university. Cuts to public education have forced universities into the market. University funding is now distributed disproportionately to areas of the university deemed profitable – departments producing marketable research, for example. The university has grown beholden to the very interests that were once susceptible to critique. And all too often, profits interests diminish discourse and dissent. It is thus imperative now more than ever that universities be able to operate separately from powerful institutions, classes and individuals in society. Universities should, as social institutions, hold tenure, as it were. But the traditional “Ivory Tower” will not do. Universities must also be made inclusive and democratic, even if that means a partial dissociation from our contemporary class society.

Simply, students and faculty at UBC are facing an assault on their freedoms, and on multiple fronts. Unacceptably, high tuition has forced many students to work to support their education. The 2006 Graduating Students Survey at UBC found that: “About 6 in 10 students report that they were employed while in school, working about 19 hours a week on average. Almost 7 in 10 students who report working while in university say that their employment had at least some negative impact on their academic performance.” The result is a university partial to wealth and privilege. Cuts to grants and bur-

sary programs have entrenched class norms at the university while ruling out political or community participation for those students committed to full course loads and wage-earning.

Government funding to universities has dropped from 81.3% of the university’s operating revenue in 1983 to 59.3%, while funding from tuition has increased from 12.9% to 29.1%. Revenue from the corporate world has made up for much of the gap. UBC aggressively seeks partnerships with industry through the University Industry Liaison Office, which in 2006 reported \$16.7 million in revenue directly from licensing of technologies and other corporate partnerships.

The \$700 million UBC endowment, which accounts for about \$35 million in revenue each year, appears to give the university some measure of independence, but that is a false impression. Donations from private individuals to the endowment are “targeted” (the donors can specify where the financial growth generated by their donation will be spent). This has resulted, for example, in almost twice as much funding from the endowment for the faculty of Applied Science than for the faculty of Science, and more money still for the Forestry department. The Faculty of Arts has 11,378 students enrolled, while the faculty of forestry has only 471, but they receive virtually identical amounts of funding from the endowment. Philanthropic interests are often, unfortunately, also corporate interests.

Further, the endowment depends for its sustainability on investment, much of which is in private corporations. This makes it the university’s best interest to promote the private sector and avoid being a potentially destabilizing force in the economy. Because of an overall lack of democracy at UBC, ethical investment programs, such as modeled on the AMS Ethical Purchasing Policy, have no way of

being implemented. Egregious violators of human rights, war profiteers (UBC Endowment's Carlyle Group, for example) and other such corporations benefit from UBC's undemocratic character.

UBC is also coming to depend heavily for income on the development of market housing and associated developments. According to the document, A Foundation for Excellence, "That portion of UBC Endowment sourced from The University Town development is expected to grow dramatically over the next ten years." On an accompanying chart, University Town was shown expected to account for fully a third of the Endowment's worth by 2014.

Faculties frustrated by lack of funding are increasingly looking to business or private individuals for capital projects. The "Ladha" Student Science Centre, the "Meekison" Arts Student Space, and the massive renovation of the Sauder School of Business are all examples of this. All of this adds up to a very grim situation for students and society as a whole, with only marginal improvements in the quality of education, if not deterioration. The National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE) found that UBC scored behind its peers in every category. There was not one category – Academic Challenge, Active Learning, Student-Faculty, Enriching Education, Supportive Campus – in which UBC did better than average. A telling result is that six percent fewer senior students responded positively to questions about a supportive campus than first-year students. This clearly shows that many students are feeling abandoned as they progress through their degrees. And as the composition of the Endowment demonstrates, it is no longer in the university's best interest to critique the corporate world, or the fundamental structure of society: UBC now depends upon both.

The Knoll feels strongly that students, and the AMS executive, must act urgently to democratize and save the university system. We need to elect representatives who are willing to devote themselves to combating the erosion of university independence.

Our freedom will be an analog to the academic tenure system: tenure for universities and for students. That is, we need that universities be guaranteed ample funding from society. Greece is an example, where free post-secondary education is guaranteed constitutionally. Otherwise, the university cannot carry out its functions. Funding cannot be tied to the vacillations of the market or to the whims of a given provincial or federal government. Funding must come directly from the taxpayer without being channeled through unaccountable appointees. We need to work towards a long-term goal of eliminating tuition completely – post secondary education needs to be free on the same terms as secondary education, to allow students the freedom to pursue risky academic interests and projects that may not result in immediate vocational opportunities. We must allow students to devote their time to their education and to social engagement in the community, without spending all of their "free" time earning enough money to scrape by. All racialized, class-based, and discriminatory barriers to university admission and participation have to be eliminated.

The governance system at UBC needs to be dramatically revised. In particular, the Board of Governors needs to be democratized. The AMS should lobby for the provincial appointees to be elected, rather than appointed, and the AMS also should lobby to have the number of student seats on the board increased. The BoG is the most powerful group at UBC, and it is against the interests of students, faculty, and society to have 50% of the board dedicated to individuals whose interests lie not only in the status-quo, but in the will of unelected party elites and functionaries.

The AMS needs to aggressively lobby for tuition reduction, in partnership with the university, faculty, and other student societies. We must be willing to work with all groups that share our goals in this area, even if we disagree with them on other issues.

The AMS must lobby for a halt to further development at UBC until the planning process can be

revised to empower students. Students should not just be giving “feedback” on a range of unpalatable options, but must have an active role in determining what those options are. The areas of campus dedicated to U-Town need to be re-evaluated, and a way to integrate the U-Town plan and the campus plan needs to be found, if possible. Further development of market housing needs to be declared unacceptable, and student housing should be prioritized in its stead.

A priority of the AMS should be to push forward the governance review of UBC, and be an active party in that process. UBC needs to have democratic oversight of its development activities and administration, something which so far does not exist. The AMS should also use this review as leverage to force the university to make concessions regarding student participation in planning, concessions that the administration would otherwise not make if it were not seeking to appear responsible before the eyes of provincial evaluators.

The AMS executive needs to be restructured and de-technocratized in order for it to become more political. The VP Administration and VP Finance positions should be somehow combined, with many of their bureaucratic functions dedicated to permanent employees. A new position should either be created, dedicated to communication, outreach, and

student support, or the entire executive should be reshuffled.

The resource groups, which are active in promoting the interests of marginalized students and members of society, need to be better supported by the AMS, and should have a seat on AMS council (probably non-voting initially). Clubs also need further support, particularly clubs dedicated to social action. The AMS should make it easier for clubs and the Resource Groups to use the Student Union Building resources, and should lower or eliminate charges for equipment such as projectors, screens, sound equipment, and catering. It does not make sense that money dedicated by students to activism go straight back into the operating budget of the AMS.

The AMS needs to stop shying away from taking potentially controversial political positions. The Human Rights policy must be reinstated in such a way that assures that the AMS will not involve itself with organizations that have been condemned by reputable third parties for human rights violations. The policy needs to exist, and needs to be enforceable.

The President

by Bob Neubauer

The President – what’s up with that guy? Who is this person that rules the Alma Mater Society with an iron gauntlet, and yet whose demagoguery is so potent, so charismatic, it rallies to his/her cause an overwhelming majority of the student body (or more accurately – approximately 4-6% of it)? Apparently the President does quite a bit. At the most fundamental level, the President oversees the general operations of the AMS. This involves coordinating with the other executives and helping them to manage their portfolios. Similarly, the President oversees the general management of AMS businesses in the SUB.

Less ephemeral, the President also oversees the operations of AMS council which meets twice a month. Importantly, it is the President’s job to set the agenda for council meeting, which includes the authority to prioritize certain topics of discussion. This of course gives the President a good deal of power when it comes to AMS policy, since a President’s conception of what programs and issues are of importance may greatly influence which items get on the AMS council agenda during the year. The President is also the only person authorized to speak for the AMS, though she/he does have the ability to delegate that task to others. Regardless of the policies, priorities, and beliefs of other executives, it is only the President that can claim to speak on behalf of student government. This too is a great responsibility. After all, AMS President communicates not only with administration officials, but student government of other universities, media, and members of government (like, the real kind). The President also oversees student initiatives and special projects. This has two important implications for the position. First, it means that the president tends to work with grotesquely large sums of money. For instance, this last year Kevin Keystone

took a hands-on role in determining AMS involvement in construction of the new childcare facility, culminating in the approval of a 1 million dollar motion towards the new \$4.2 million facility. All of this leaves us with the important question – what sort of person do you want as President? For one, it seems important that the President be someone who is fiscally capable. The handling of vast quantities of money means that you want the sort of President who knows how to prioritize spending, preferably without embezzling millions of dollars to pay for a high-flying lifestyle of eight-balls and Kobe beef sirloin. Also, given the President’s power to set council’s agenda, and their role overseeing large student initiatives and special projects, it is clear that having an AMS President with a well defined platform is important. Which programs he/she sees as urgent, unnecessary, etc. will have an impact on just which initiatives get seriously pursued in the coming year or not. It is not enough, it seems to me, to have a President who can boast only that they will “represent students” – it is necessary to have someone with a well defined idea of what students really need and want.

Hence, the values that your President stands for are important. Since they are in charge of speaking for the AMS, it is your President that will work to ensure that shopper’s drugmart keeps it’s grubby, grubby paws off. If you care about whether or not your campus will pimp out it’s land to corporations, then you should choose the candidate that feels the same. But ideas are only a part of it. You want a president who you feel can really get the job done, who has handled things and who hasn’t compromised his/her principles in the face of the machine. Barring such a candidate, you can always vote for the construction pylon on a write-in ballot.

Jeff Friedrich

www.JeffFriedrich.com

Jeff Friedrich considers himself a candidate with ideas, and fuck anyone who says otherwise. He is the more experienced presidential candidate by leaps and bounds, having spent the last year as AMS VP Academic. He is only too happy to tell you about his accomplishments. In the last year he helped close a \$4.2 million deal to build a new childcare facility on campus. He also lobbied the GVRD into pressuring the University to accept a Provincial Governance Review that will look into changing UBC's municipal structure. The review may force the administration to give students more control over campus development (residences and not condos). If elected, Jeff will fight to include students in campus development, and will further support the protection of UBC farm. He also wants to secure more funding and support for AMS clubs and constituencies, including the resource groups. He supports the non-extension of the Coke exclusivity deal, and encourages students to make their voice heard in this regard. Jeff is also adamant that equality of access to education needs to be secured through higher funding for grants, low-interest loans, and bursaries for low-income students. Finally, he believes the AMS must become involved in working to improve quality of education at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. No ideas? Fuck you.

Jeff got hit pretty bad at the beginning of the campaign. An early Ubyyssey editorial called him a boring, non-issue candidate who had no fresh ideas for grabbing students. On top of this, his opponent's assertion that Jeff was part of an irrelevant, bureaucratic, and insular AMS that wasted student's money while failing to address issues relevant to the average student must have been, well, painful. So Jeff came back swinging.

He countered Maxwell's accusation of waste by noting that student fees at UBC were among the

lowest in the country, and that the AMS, far from being irrelevant, provided students with such benefits as free transit and health and dental plans, among countless other services. On top of this, Jeff was pissed off that experience had somehow become a "4 letter word", and was only too eager to talk about his accomplishments as VP Academic. Frustrated at the increasing corporatization of campus, Jeff worked with the GVRD to pressure the University to accept a Provincial Governance Review, with the goal of changing UBC's municipal structure in order to give students a greater say in campus development. According to Jeff, "they did that because they were scared, because we could have said, 'development stops tomorrow guys, unless you get your shit together.' Because of that they've offered us a student seat on the Development Permits Board and on the President's Property Planning Committee". Jeff also helped secure the 4.2 million dollar expansion of child care facilities that will help students with children manage the dual burdens of academia and parenthood. In response to the Ubyyssey's accusations of irrelevancy, Jeff points out that "we used student money to do it and the Ubyyssey hasn't covered any of it, instead choosing to write a story about how irrelevant the AMS is. Fuck guys, what do we have to do?"

Jeff's belief on tuition is controversial to many. Considering an abolition of tuition unrealistic, he believes the AMS must lobby to increase funding for bursaries, low interest loans, scholarships, thereby keeping the burden off payment off low-income students, while continuing to milk rich kids with high tuition rates. He sees this as a more progressive solution to the tuition question than simply eliminating tuition altogether.



"Apathy"

by Nate Crompton

L'Etranger presidential candidate Maxwell Maxwell would have us view his own de-Piratization a de-privatization. In a recent interview with *The Knoll*, Maxwell showed loathing for Coca-cola and the corporations, claiming *de rigueur*: "students are sick of their university turning into a corporate strip mall".

I remember when Maxwell de-Piratized. His first anti-Friedrich decrees were on student "apathy" and bureaucratic "fat cutting" — fair first intuitions, to be sure, but not the first instincts of a progressive candidate.

In fact, it's clear that for Maxwell, "apathy" is not the shared work of high tuition, high course loads and low minimum wages, nor is it the result of corporatized student life, corporatized course curriculums, etc. According to Maxwell, "apathy" is first an "information" problem: the fault of poor communication mechanics. For him, the rough division of the student body into a privileged group of students, on the one hand, and an overworked, indebted class, on the other, is little related to "apathy".

In fact, privileged students now govern the student body, force on students a technocratic, irrelevant mandate, and avoid any issues concerning human welfare (war, famine, support centers, activism, celebrations of life, festivities, education). The quandary is twofold, involving the 6 in 10 students who 1) work an average of 19 hours a week, while studying, who thus cannot afford to pay attention to 2) the inconsequential content of AMS politics.

Our conventional "apathy" wisdom is disrupted by working class students. I dedicate the scare quotes around "apathy" to those who work and suffer debt, because in fact "apathy" has become a mere elite discourse emblazoned by the usual contempt towards the "politically irresponsible" masses. On a recent Elections Insider post, editors asked: "Ought

we to concentrate on engaging more students in UBC affairs, or on engaging the small number more meaningfully?" This unashamed elitism — the notion that politics requires a small, "meaningful" elite because average people are by nature incapable of contributing to politics — is characteristic of all writers who deliberately overlook apathy's basis in the commercialized agora. Conveniently, such writers deny apathy on campus as something related to the university administration's current preference for a deeply class-stratified capitalist society. Anti-apathy writing is today the work of rascals, actually.

Many candidates in the past have been elected on heavily anti-apathy platforms. These candidates have considered apathy in technical terms, to varying degrees, and, unsurprisingly, have failed to reverse its course. It seems though, that Jeff F. is better.

Certainly Jeff's temper as "mediator of the conflicting interests" has suppressed in him any sense of urgency or the need for a radical effort to reform the university. Many have long been bored by Jeff's precarious style as bipartisan arbiter. But Jeff's record consists in a political subtlety valuable to progress, actually. And since Maxwell's challenge, he has also taken a noticeably new confidence in Orrism (David Orr). Recently he spoke at a sustainability conference on AMS green policy, where he referred to the potential for the AMS to undermine the university administration's U-Town project. Presumably with recent changes in the project, the AMS can now intervene in the administration's undemocratic flailings-about. By re-allocating university money from U-Town market housing to subsidized student housing, an important barrier to enrollment will have been removed. Student debt and wage-work will also have been reduced. Both of those will make the university more plural, diverse, de-gentrified, more political, and thus, undoubtedly less "apathetic".

VP Academic and University Affairs

by Mike Thicke

The VP Academic and University Affairs portfolio is the broadest and most time-consuming portfolio on the executive. Before the AMS executive was reformed, the VP Academic position was the only Vice President position – the other executives were directors. The current structure of the portfolio and the heavy workloads are probably carryovers from that period. Roughly, the VP Academic is responsible for three broad areas – academic issues, such as professor evaluations; university affairs, such as the campus plan, U-Town and University Boulevard; and hiring for / overseeing services such as Safewalk. Although there are overlaps – the daycare issue is both an academic issue, as parents who cannot get daycare spots are severely disadvantaged academically, and about university affairs, as the university needs to be lobbied to tie new daycare spots to new developments – these issues are largely autonomous. This autonomy, coupled with the heavy workload, is one of the primary reasons for considering a reshuffling of executive responsibilities.

There are several issues around campus development and university governance that are of particular importance. The “What’s the Plan?” Campus Plan consultation process began this fall and will continue through next year. The VP Academic will play an important role in ensuring a student voice in that process. The University Boulevard process is currently stalled, and the VP Academic can be influential in finding a new direction for that. The governance review, which will have the province evaluate and possibly change the way UBC is run

(for instance, the UBC area could become its own municipality, with an elected council), can both be influenced by the VP Academic, and can be used by the VP Academic to achieve change, by using the university’s fear that the review may lessen its power if the university does not prove its accountability. Finally, the UBC Farm’s fate is still uncertain, and the VP Academic can work to ensure that the Farm continues to thrive for many years to come.

In July the AMS, primarily due to Jeff Friedrich’s work as VP Academic, produced a document recommending five changes to the way UBC is governed: A seat on the board of UBC Properties Trust (the private corporation owned by UBC that does development and campus maintenance) or the creation of an advisory board to monitor development on campus; a seat on the UBC Development Permits Board; a graduate student seat on the UBC Board of Governors; a more meaningful consultation process for campus planning and development; and a governance review of UBC. An incoming VP Academic would have to prioritize assessing what progress has been made towards these goals, how to further them, and how to expand on them.

We are very focused on the development side of the VP Academic portfolio, but as Tariq Ahmed reminded me, universities are first and foremost about learning - academics. If you are dissatisfied with class sizes or quality of teachers, then you should be talking to the VP Academic.

Brendon Goodmurphy

www.votebrendon.com

Brendon Goodmurphy is currently and Arts Undergraduate Society representative to the AMS council. In that capacity he has been vocal in pushing sustainability issues around development. He has also been the co-chair of the Student Environment Centre for the last two years, and was involved in the SEC “Seeds for Change” conference which took place this past weekend at UBC and drew about 250 participants. It speaks to Brendon’s personal commitment to making UBC sustainable and healthy that he was so involved with that conference in the middle of the very busy campaign period. Brendon has also served on several committees directly related to development and student life at UBC. Brendon has also been active in other leadership

roles on campus, such as helping to establish the UBC Learning Exchange Program, which gives educational workshops to kids on the downtown east side. Brendon has the ability, knowledge, and passion to make the most of the VP Academic and University Affairs portfolio.



Bruce Krayenhoff

<http://ElectBruce.googlepages.com/>

Bruce is a masters student in physics at UBC. His big idea is to bring a Citizens’ Assembly (CA) to UBC. A CA is a randomly selected and paid group of students. They would consider proposals from other students and either pass those proposals on to council, or directly to referendum. The CA would also evaluate the performance of the council, suggest ways to change the council’s operation if necessary, and make recommendations during elections.

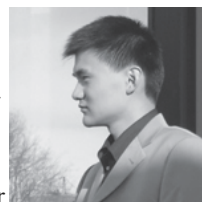


Due to lack of experience, Bruce is mostly a one issue candidate. On other issues he appears to basically agree with everything Brendon says. Rather than have Bruce try to gain all of Brendon’s knowledge, we would rather see Brendon use Bruce to propose a trial version of the Citizens’ Assembly for next year.

Jerry Fan Fan

www.JerryFanFan.com

Jerry Fan Fan claims to have simple, innovative ideas that will really work, unlike the other candidates. One of his ideas is to halt further construction of student housing and instead enter in to agreements with off-campus landlords to subsidize students living there. This will, he says, save trees. Given that the vacancy rate in Vancouver is extremely low, and rent is quite expensive around UBC, it would be quite surprising if this was simple to implement as a long-term solution. We also feel it is desirable to have a strong student resident population at UBC. Jerry does not seem much interested in being a strong lobbying force to the administration, and that is one of our primary criteria for this position. So though he does bring a unique outlook to the position, we cannot endorse him.



Vice-President Administration

by Bahram Norouzi

To get a feeling of what VP-Admin does, think of what happens in the SUB everyday and that's pretty much it: club activities, AMS services, AMS catering, building renovation and maintenance... are directly or indirectly under the jurisdiction of the VP-Admin.

Arguably, chairing the SAC (Student Administrative Commission) and overseeing clubs through the SAC are the most important tasks of the VP-Admin. SAC plans and organizes club days events, takes care of office and locker assignments, manages room bookings within the SUB, (de/)constitutes clubs, and provides advisory and resource assistance to clubs. Choosing the SAC staff and giving direction to their work, VP-Admin can have significant influence on the relation of the AMS council and the clubs and should seek to make that AMS body more of a resource than a hurdle for the clubs. VP-Admin also chairs the Impact Committee and the Renovation Planning Group and has a chair on the Business Operation Committee. This gives the VP-Admin a considerable say in the sustainability of AMS businesses and in how the renovation plans for the SUB occur.

What we think the next VP-Admin should do:

SAC reforms: The previous VP-Admin, David Yuen, has done a good job in refining the SAC policies and making the SAC more friendly and helpful to the clubs. Further steps should yet be taken: many of the AMS policies towards the clubs – like the booking services – should be revised, also we think SAC can have a more active relation with the clubs; for example, it may help to expect the SACeers to attend at least one meeting of each club and tell them about all sorts of resources that the AMS provides to the clubs.

SUB building was built in 1968, since then the UBC student population has more than doubled, and there's no sign of growth slowing down. Further, with the expansion of the U-town project the AMS businesses will find themselves in some tough competition. Of course we cannot have a new building right away, and it is not clear if we need a new building at all, but the process of planning and studying the options should start very soon.

Greening the SUB: There is lots of room for making the SUB more sustainable. Last year the Impact committee was almost dormant; the new VP-Admin should find ways to reactivate that committee and should make up for all that was not done last year. Bringing more compost and recycling bins to the SUB and getting rid of the Styrofoam containers are some obvious first steps.

The People's Potato: affordable vegan food. The People's Potato is a Food Not Bombs type project that has already been implemented at Concordia University and elsewhere. The idea is to use second quality produce – i.e. having cosmetic flaws but otherwise perfectly fine – that has been donated by businesses to cook affordable, healthy, nutritious, and eco-friendly food in a kitchen staffed by volunteers and ran on a consensus basis. The implementation of this project doesn't just fit under the VP-Admin portfolio, but it is a great project for the next VP-Admin nonetheless.

Modifying the portfolio and combining it with the VP-Finance: The VP-Admin and VP-Finance positions have enough in common that a combining the two position looks like a plausible thing to do. Also, neither of the positions have a substantial political bearing, perhaps making their election in one-year cycles cumbersome. Or perhaps combining the two adds to the political significance of the position.

Liz Ferris

Yes, we know Liz dropped out of the race, but we really miss her! Liz was the best candidate for the position, had the best ideas for clubs, and the best ideas about sustainability. We hope the other candidates can look to Liz, seek her out, and adopt her ideas as their own.

Suvina To and Sarah Naiman both seem competent to us. Suvina has more experience, as she served on the Student Administrative Commission. Sarah seems to have more enthusiastic ideas for change, but many ideas that we just think will not work, like the AMS Video Sharing Channel, which frankly sounds like yet another disaster in the fairly long line of VP Admin spending disasters (conversation pit, sliding doors, and council chambers renovation).

Suvina To

www.SuvinaTo.com

Suvina comes with a year of experience in the SAC, and her serious ideas revolve very much around that experience. She seems to be quite capable and willing to reform the SAC and the VP-Admin office to improve on student relations with the AMS. Her ideas are concrete and realistic, and she appreciates organizational reform – as opposed to direct investment – as an effective method for improving SUB and AMS operations. She is also very friendly and approachable, which fits well with her plans for bringing students and the AMS closer together. Suvina's weakness comes from a platform that lacks innovative initiatives and long term vision.



Sarah Naiman

www.VoteNaiman.com

Sarah is currently an Art Undergraduate Society representative at the AMS council. This has given her some good understanding of how the council works. She seems to have a very strong personality and some good leadership skills. From our encounters with her we can say that she is very organized, has great communication skills and is dedicated to the AMS: characteristics that are very essential to the VP-Admin portfolio. Sarah's platform engages student life and efforts to bridge the gap between the AMS and the students. She has some interesting and fairly innovative ideas on these issues.



Sarah, however, has no experience with the VP-Admin portfolio and all the technical details that come with the position. Due to this lack of experience, Sarah's platform remains fairly general and abstract. Her platform includes setting a dinner event with the presidents of all clubs and creating a video sharing channel to broadcast student made clips and campus news to be projected in the concourse of the SUB. These seem to be wishy-washy expensive ideas that promise to spend lots of student money.

Vice-President External

By Nate Crompton

The AMS Executive is currently fragmented into specialized offices. VP Academic does this and that, VP Admin does that and this, and so goes the division of labor. Executive specialization is presumed efficient, the better to serve student needs. At present, however, divided offices work exactly against students.

VP External brings the AMS into contact with institutions and organizations outside UBC. A large part of the job is taken up lobbying in Ottawa and to the province. But how soon we seem to forget that lobbying is not for lobbying's sake. It's a means for increasing public funding to the university. But if the very design of UBC government serves exactly to confuse the effects of lobbying, a VP External must first confront those local obstacles.

It is the undemocratic structure of the university that prevents increases in public funding. Under the University Act, the Province holds the right to populate UBC's highest governing body, the Board of Governors, with unelected partisan appointees. Unlike in Greece and elsewhere in the North, where free post-secondary education is guaranteed constitutionally, public education in BC is subject to political fluctuations, oftentimes the will of a small elite.

In 1976, Canada signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which stated that "higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education." Since then, Canadian neoliberals have secured a reduction in federal spending on post-secondary education by nearly two thirds as a percentage of national GDP. Such cuts have left large budget deficits at the universities, which have been forced to privatize,

looking to the market for the compensation of lost funds. In fact, UBC now engages privatization at every level: the commercialization of research, market investment through the Endowment, real-estate projects, development plans (such as U-Town), exclusivity contracts, corporate leases, all in the absence of bettered education and to the benefit of a small class of investors and owners. It is that class whose interests are represented by the governing Liberal Party, and it is that Liberal Party whose undemocratic appointees hold a majority at UBC's Board of Governors.

Until the university administration is capable of working with students to pressure for the common goal of increased funding, most isolated lobby expeditions by the AMS External office remain at the level of spectacle. An AMS VP External should work within the university to create an alliance of students, faculty and staff interested in establishing UBC as a public, democratic and inclusive university. The alliance should work towards democratizing all university institutions by pursuing what has begun under Jeff Friedrich's "Our Town" proposals – the democratization of UBC Properties Trust, Board of Governors and other powerful bodies – while working to re-allocate all U-Town and market housing expenses to a student housing program and a significantly expanded needs-based student bursary program.

Execs should step outside their prescribed roles and work as a unity in order to change the university. The problems facing students and prospective students are today larger than any particularity. An effective VP External will recognize the need to abandon old tasks in order to democratize and de-commercialize the university.

Joel Kozwarski

www.VoteForaKoz.blogspot.com

Joel Kozwarski is a laid-back, personable, and philosophical candidate. He is also a candidate who faces many of the same problems all students do. He commutes to school on the bus every day. You can trust Joel to push for better bus service, because Joel needs better bus service. Joel, like most students, has to work to support himself while he goes to school. This has meant that he has been unable, for instance, to do class announcements in the mornings, because he works mornings, whereas Matt Naylor has been doing class announcements all day, every day. Joel's progressive outlook will also make it much more likely that the CFS will give him respect and be willing to work with UBC.

Fair or not, the CFS will likely be extremely hostile to a dedicated Liberal supporter and much more receptive to a VP External who shares many of their political views.



Outgoing VP External Ian Pattillo endorses Joel:

Having immersed myself in this job a year ago with little to no prior experience in educational policy or student government, I like to think I've learnt a lot about what it takes to do it well. There are a number of skills I simply do not have, or did not have but was able to develop, which serve this portfolio well. I see these attributes in Joel Kozwarski, which gives him a great head start in becoming an effective VP External. I've known Joel for a while and have often admired his work ethic: perhaps the most important component of having a successful year and effecting meaningful change for the students we represent. Secondly, Joel's desire to see improvements at our University combined with his diplomatic tact make it clear that he will be capable of reconciling the competing interests at play when arguing for investments in higher learning. This involves warring political entities, as well as disparate opinions coming from the many interest groups and stakeholders in PSE. To present our student driven agenda as the superior one takes cunning intellectual warfare. Joel is the only candidate that I estimate to be suited for delivering persuasive and

articulate arguments for education to the politicians, bureaucrats and media that one interacts with daily in this job. Further, it is interesting to note that achieving policy influence is not as wholly political as some may assume. Joel has the personal touch necessary to gain the favour of the politicians he will be lobbying over the course of his term as VP External.

It was not easy for me to determine that Joel was the best candidate for the job, because there are some passionate contenders and some of them have good ideas. None of them, however, represent a significant departure from the status quo of AMS External Affairs. Under those circumstances, I believe Joel Kozwarski to be the most capable in making continued modest strides towards the more affordable, accessible and high quality University that we all need. (And yes, cynics, we do make progress).

- Ian Pattillo

Matt Naylor

www.VoteNaylor.com

The following are selections from an interview with Matthew Naylor:

NC: Should you make it common knowledge, as part of your platform, that you're a committed Liberal, so that people know that they're electing a party member. [If not], is there going to be a conflict of interests later on?

MN: [...] I am a federal Liberal, and I believe in a lot of what the Liberal party stands for, but student politics and lobbying do not necessarily mean a conflict of interest. I would like to campaign on what is important to students, and not really my membership in the party. [...] Personally, I take elected positions very, very seriously, and because I would have been elected by the people of UBC, I am responsible to them, and it is my job to do what their will is.

NC: The Liberal parties, provincial and federal, [...] both agree on the consistent increases in tuition that have taken place. [Under liberal governments, tuition at UBC has increased 91% through the past 5 years.] It seems that the Liberal parties aren't interested in a return to the 20% share level for tuition, nor a return to 1970's spending levels. So in that sense, if students want a return to the 20%, or lower, there is a conflict between the Liberal party and the students. [...]

At the level of funding from the Province, do you see it as important to first work inside the university to make the university [...] more democratic, in the sense that currently Liberal appointees presently control much of the affairs of the university. Is it necessary to democratize the school's highest governing bodies in order to make post-secondary education [less vulnerable to] political forces?

MN: This is one particular area where I

think Joel and I differ significantly, think that is because I take a more realistic approach to this. While it would be absolutely lovely to have a democratiza-

tion of the highest governing bodies, I don't think it's something that we can reasonably expect the provincial government to do. However, one thing that I do want to do is to get them to start appointing people who will be receptive to our issues [...] And because it's taxpayers who are paying for the university, there is a case to be made for them having control over the university[...] And] it will be too difficult to run those elections.

NC: But perhaps it will be more difficult to reach any student goal without structural change. Certainly the public should elect members to BoG: it is their money. Currently, however, it is the party that appoints members, not the people. Here at the municipal level, citizens elect members to a parks board, a thing not nearly as important as a large public university. Isn't the strong case against [elections] also the case against student and democratic control of student affairs?

MN: [...] There can be some [political] will, and if we make [our goals] a priority in our lobbying with the government, that will be significant, there will be some change. One thing that will make it more likely for that to get done is if we start lobbying with other schools.

NC: Yes, you've spoken of that cooperation as a "Unified Front". But is it possible to apply your Unified Front model to the university itself. If so, [do we] find that the university is fragmented in such a way that you can't even create a unified



front within the university, to go to the province. To say what I mean: the VP's and half of the Board of Governors and some of the highest positions at the university are occupied by individuals specifically interested in raising funds for the university through the market. The priority is to raise money for the university through the Endowment, market housing, privatized research and so on. That takes, among other things, a great deal of energy, and an energy that is forever diverted from public and provincial campaigns, and diverted from efforts to cooperate with students. Jeff [Friedrich] has alluded to this. There is a resistance among administrators to go the province as a unified front with students, and to Ottawa. [What...] would you do about that?

MN: Unfortunately I don't know as much about the personalities and fragmentation on BoG as I would like. However, I think I would certainly be willing to ask the BoG reps. and other people willing to work with students, I know the Dean of Science who is one of those people, very receptive, Brian Sullivan tends to have student [support] but I think one of the things we might want to do would be to take a couple of key priorities we are trying to put forward and say "look BoG, Administration, etc, etc, will you go to the province and ask for this with us".

NC: But any partisan appointee will [favor the present budget]. And it's not just the Board of Governors, there is the UBC Endowment Office, Properties Trust [...] the university apparatus is committed to bringing in fairly marginal profits at the level of the market, whereas the province holds \$5 million people or something, a huge source of public funding. I mean, in places all over the world – and this isn't exceptional to Scandinavia – post-secondary education is a right, tuition is guaranteed free. A lot of the European countries function on that type of model, we need to have a bigger vision for the system.

MN: I think a bigger vision is actually something that I have. [...]

NC: University relations with First Nations have been [...] exploitative. You may know that the Musquaem and UBC are negotiating land claims in court at present... Would you say there is some sort of place in the VP External portfolio to improve university and student relations with First Nations. Is there potential in the future for the AMS to facilitate or contribute to the struggle of First Nations.

MN: I think it's important to respect and acknowledge the injustices that have been committed against the first nations. One thing that I can't stand is when people, with the very best intentions, victimize the First Nations. I am of Native heritage. [...] I think the idea that "we did this and now we owe you something" is something that is bad and different from the idea that "we did this and we have to help you undo what we've done". It is a semantic difference, but I think it's fundamentally important.

NC: A further semantic shift would be the one that refuses to say "we did this in the past" and says, "look at the injustices that still persist". How does the victimization [you mention] compare to the way in which the university has taken the First Nations as an emblem of their new progressive image?

MN: I'm going to display myself here, and I'm really quite comfortable admitting this, I don't know as much about these issues as I'd like to. I'm very good at learning about them. I think that the primary responsibility of the VP External is to students. I can't really offer any more than to say "I'll look into it." I don't want to say something that I don't mean.

Vice-President Finance

by Mike Thicke

Near the end of Sophia Haque's term, she brought forward a motion to AMS council to approve a rubber stamp of her signature that the staff could use to authorize cheques. Prior to that, a good deal of Sophia's day was spent actually signing all those cheques. This speaks volumes about the portfolio. Should elected positions really be about – literally – rubber stamping?

That is not to say that the VP Finance does nothing, or that Sophia was not effective in her role. One of her significant achievements was her dogged pursuit of the UBC Athletics Department. This department collected \$176 from each student this year, in addition to \$21 dedicated to athletics and intramurals. The \$21 is significant, as this is a fee collected by the AMS, rather than by the university (though there is no obvious way for most students to know this). It seemed that UBC Athletics was actually diverting money from that \$21 to pay for varsity athletes to fly planes across the continent to play games. I'm not entirely clear about if this was actually the case, but what was clear was that the financial details of Athletics were extremely difficult to obtain, and extremely difficult to understand once they were obtained. Sophia did an admirable job in pressuring Athletics into being more accountable.

The VP Finance also has many other responsibilities, such as overseeing club budgets through the finance commission, preparing the AMS budget (with a lot of help), and chairing the Business Operations

Committee, which oversees AMS businesses.

Combine VP Finance and VP Administration

We feel that many of the VP Finance responsibilities can be offloaded to permanent paid positions, and many overlap with the VP Administration portfolio. These portfolios, which tend to have a lower workload than the other positions, could be combined, or failing that there could be a reshuffling of the executive to better balance responsibilities and make all elected positions significantly political.

Make it Easier for Clubs and Resource Groups to Operate

This is largely an Administrative duty, but the VP Finance could do more for clubs as well. For instance, the AMS should give resource groups and clubs access to catering at-cost for events, rather than the price charged to outside groups. Basic equipment use should be free, and it should be easy for clubs and resource groups to use that equipment.

Support the VP Administration in the Creation of a People's Potato (see Admin)

The People's Potato could take revenue away from AMS businesses, and it would operate at a loss. The VP Finance executive would be instrumental in making this project possible.

Brittany Tyson

www.votebty.com

Brittany has served on the Finance Commission for two years, and lists one of her accomplishments as creating an online submissions process for clubs, to cut down on the bureaucratic hassle and long early-morning lineups. Her platform relating to clubs seeks to go further in the same direction. Brittany comes across as very knowledgeable and very confident in her abilities. She also believes that this position in particular requires a great deal of experience, which would make her the only reasonable choice.

If this is true, then there is something wrong with the position, because these positions should be open and accessible to all students. If the hurdles to be-

coming an executive are this high, then we will never realistically have two qualified candidates running against each other. What kind of democracy is that?

The problem is that we believe that Brittany is right – the portfolio does require experience and competence, and Brittany has demonstrated those virtues amply.



Peter Rizov

www.Elect.PDRizov.com

Peter is a relative newcomer to AMS politics, though he did serve on the Elections Committee last year, and has been involved somewhat with the Commerce Undergraduate Society. Peter was against the CUS taking a position on the building referendum (the CUS supported a “yes” vote), and that has translated to his feelings about an athletics referendum. As does Brittany, Peter supports a referendum on increasing athletics fees, but is adamant that the AMS should not take a position in such a debate.

Peter is running largely a “fresh ideas” campaign. Whereas Brittany’s slogan at debates has been “A vote for me is a vote for experience”, Peter’s has been “A vote for me is a vote against the status-quo”. Peter has been critical of the technocratic barriers to entry of the VP Finance portfolio, and seems very open to investigating a restructuring of the

executive. Peter has also been critical of Brittany’s plan to “re-brand” the AMS – to make it more visible to students. He would prefer to spend that money elsewhere.

Peter has two weaknesses. The first is lack of experience. Though he is compelling in his analysis of why that should not be a problem, the reality is that it is a problem. The second is that there does exist opportunities to gain the necessary experience, but he did not avail himself of those opportunities. His criticisms were often vague, and though he is right that information is difficult to find, it is not impossible.



Board of Governors

by Mike Thicke

“UBC’s 21-member Board of Governors comprises the chancellor, the president, eleven persons appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor, three faculty members elected by faculty, three full-time students elected by students and two persons elected by and from the full-time employees of the University who are not faculty members.

By legislation, the Board is responsible for the management, administration and control of the property, revenue, business and affairs of the University, including the appointment of senior officials and faculty on the recommendation of the President.

The Governors’ diverse backgrounds provide valuable input during Board deliberations. Although members bring to the Board the views of various constituencies, there are no advocates for any one group. Decisions are made in the best overall interest of the University and in support of UBC’s mission to be a world-renowned institution of higher education and research.”

- <http://www.bog.ubc.ca/>

The Knoll has been discussing the Board of Governors a lot in this issue, so you deserve some explanation as to why. Though we think it pays too little, the government does pay for quite a bit of the

university’s operations. This is the justification for having the highest governing body at UBC dominated by provincial appointees. They pay for it, so they get to run it. There is a huge conflict of interest here, though. The province does not want to increase funding for universities, so should we expect them to appoint representatives that are likely to foster an environment that will be conducive to lowering tuition? Of course not! The province appoints people who are in favor of increasing university revenue through any means not-government. That means development and corporate sponsorships. With all its power, the Board is able to have a stifling influence on attempts to de-corporatize and democratize the university. It would seem, therefore, provincial appointments run counter to the original vision for an autonomous public university. Reform of the Board is necessary for broader reform of the university, and meaningful change will be difficult or impossible under the current structure. AMS representatives on the board have a mandate to represent students’ interests in deciding how the university should operate. This means that these representatives need to be dedicated to attempting to reform the Board, both in how it currently operates, and in how it is structured.

Tristan Markle

Copied from Tristan's Campaign Poster

A post-secondary education is becoming more essential to get by in today's economy, so not a single person should be deterred by tuition fees, which are nothing but a tax on education.

Many studies have shown that increased tuition disproportionately deters lower-income students. And those of us who make it through should not have to go into massive debt (average student debt in Canada is now \$28,000).

Tuition accounts for only a fraction of student expenditure, so in addition to phasing out tuition, grants ought to subsidize the cost of living for less well-to-do students.

The Board of Governors (BoG), UBC's highest governing body, argues that mandatory tuition is acceptable because the funds can be used to then create grants for lower-income students. But would we use that argument to justify implementing mandatory school fees for secondary schools? No, because education is a basic human right. In any case, an increase in grants has simply not materialized at UBC.

BOG argues that increased tuition will be used to improve the quality of education. But since UBC began increasing tuition in 2001, class sizes, student/teacher ratios have gotten worse, because BOG is not interested in improving the educational experience at UBC; instead, our tuition is being used to fund infrastructure for private/public partnerships in research and real estate.

The reason educational quality does not improve is that as students pay more tuition, the government cuts funding at the same time. One half of BOG directors are appointed by the provincial govern-

ment, and they represent its interests. The same people responsible for cutting post-secondary funding are voting on BOG to increase your tuition. However, students, faculty, and staff representatives on BOG form a sizeable voting block that if coordinated could change the direction of UBC policy.



Our "If-You-Can't-Beat'em-Join'em" student politicians have bought BOG's arguments, defending the idea that young people should have enormous debts. It's as if the University administration puts them through political training upon being elected (actually, they do!).

I will present the Board of Governors with alternative models of financing post-secondary education, using as a start the strategies of several countries who respect the right of all their citizens' to access post-secondary education:

Tuition fees per year in Canadian dollars

Denmark \$0

Finland \$0

France \$450

Greece \$0 (Free Education guaranteed in constitution)

Germany \$750 (was lower until recently)

Ireland \$0 (for first undergrad)

Norway \$0

Sweden \$0 (even for international students)

The alternative is to adopt the US system. It is not a coincidence that the US is a very stratified society, marred by gross inequalities.

Jeff Friedrich

www.JeffFriedrich.com

Jeff Friedrich has been battling over campus development at UBC for his entire term, and he has been effective. The UBC Farm, dear to many, has gone from almost certain death to quasi-security. He has also pushed hard on governance issues, and will continue to push, we are sure. The governance review appears to have given him renewed confidence in the ability of the AMS to push for effective change in how the university runs. By being on the Board, Jeff will bring the face of students to the Board. He will be sitting on the board both as AMS President and elected Board member, and this will

give his word extra weight with the Board. These positions will be synergistic – his position as Board member will strengthen his presidential ability, and his position as President will strengthen his voice on the Board.



Darren Peets

www.geocities.com/DCPeets/

Darren Peets might win this seat, and if so, will be a fine representative. However, Darren and Jeff would fulfill quite similar roles on the board. Jeff knows most of what Darren knows, and could ask most of the same questions. Their outlooks would probably be quite similar. We feel that it is more valuable to have a student representative more critical than either of the front-running candidates. Darren is great, we love Darren, we respect Darren, but Tristan is the candidate serious about institutional privatization.



Senate

by Rebecca Hall

The Senate is the governing body on all University academic matters. Its 85 person membership includes 17 student positions. In this election, seven candidates are competing for five positions. Among other things, the Senate is responsible for determining University admission and exam policy; recommending the creation of faculties, departments, courses, and scholarships; advising the President on budgetary matters; and making recommendations to the Board of Governors. The Senate is also responsible for hearing student appeals regarding academic issues. The Student Senate encourages students to speak with them about academic issues, or, if your issue with academics is more political than personal, you are encouraged to attend a meeting of the Senate. These take place the third Wednesday of every month in the Law Building (room 102) .

Last year's message from the chair of the Student Senate named a stronger alignment with the AMS and the removal of barriers preventing students from resolving their academic problems as two of their primary goals. Most recently, the Senate made news by putting a time deadline on viewing marked exams. The new policy means that the longest a student will have to wait to view a marked exam is

45 days .

Among the candidates running in this election, there is a strong concern for student apathy, a big problem on campus, though perhaps peripheral when it comes to platforms regarding academic policy. More on point were the promises from many of the candidates to strengthen avenues of communication for students to make academic appeals, and to access the Student Senate.

Jaspreet Khangura offered the most comprehensive platform by far. Up for re-election, Khangura promises to continue to work toward the expansion of a pass/fail system, an initiative she pursued in the past term with the partnership of the AMS VP Academic, and support of Student Senate and AMS Council. Khangura's objectives for the pass/fail system (applicable only to electives) are to allow students the opportunity for academic exploration, and to "re-emphasize learning and de-emphasize marks/grades." Khangura's other goals include ameliorating the TA evaluation system, making exam schedules available upon request and reducing exam hardship .

There are five positions for senate, and only seven candidates. Tariq and Jaspreet are fantastic current senators who are very knowledgeable and very articulate. They would be great candidates for more high-profile positions, but they have a role on senate and are effective. Alfie Lee is the only other candidate who showed up to both debates, and seemed to know generally what he was getting in to, and had done enough reading on the position. So we are endorsing these three. If you want to vote for any of the others, you're on your own.

Senate on Development

Although the senate is thought of as the academic power structure on campus, Jeff Friedrich and Tariq Ahmed have told us that senate does have jurisdic-

tion over development, and even over non-institutional development. There was a report in the fall on this, though no progress has been made towards actualizing that power.



www.theknoll.ca/vfm

www.ams.ubc.ca/elections

Upcoming Election Events

Date	Time	Location	Candidates
Friday, Jan. 26th	12:00 - 1:30	SUB Conversation Pit	President VP External Board of Governors
Monday, Jan 29	11:00am - 1:30 pm	SUB Conversation Pit	President, Executives
Wednesday, Jan 31	5:30pm	The Gallery in the SUB	Election Results Party

Online voting January 24 - 29.

Vote with your student card Jan 31.