

Meet the new boss...

# the Gateway

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...same as the old boss.  
Pete Townsend

## Soper slate sweeps SU

by Mike Walker

Phil Soper and his entire slate swept to power Friday in a Students' Union election that saw voter turnout up sharply from last year.

Commerce student Soper beat science student Bob Kirk for the presidency by over 230 votes, with 2,284 votes out of the 4,537 ballots cast, for 53 percent of the vote. The turnout represented 28 percent of eligible voters, up from 18 percent last year.

Soper collected much of his lead, about 160 votes, at the CAB-northeast poll, where many voters were commerce students. He led in all but seven of the other 23 polls as well. Kirk showed strongly in Lister Hall, where he got about 190 of 267 votes.

Lisa Walter (Soper slate) took 56 percent of the vote for vp external, defeating Joanne Stiles (Kirk slate) by 467 votes.

Elizabeth Luptney (Soper slate) got 57 percent of the vp academic vote, beating Tim Marriott (Kirk slate) by 618 votes.

Elise Gaudet (Soper slate) defeated Cheryl Donnelly (Kirk slate) in the vp finance race, totalling 54 percent of the vote with a margin of 375 votes.

Brian Bechtel (Soper slate) beat Dariel Dent (Kirk slate) for vp internal by 638 votes, the largest spread of the election, with 58 percent of the vote.

Voters seemed to vote along slate lines, unlike last year when independent candidates split the vote in most races. The result was a split slate outcome.

This year, all members of the Soper slate tallied their largest leads at CAB-northeast; Kirk at Lister Hall. Soper slate candidates led by a few votes in most polls.

The Kirk slate's lone successful candidate was Ken Lawson-Williams, who was acclaimed as student rep to the Board of Governors.

Does the outcome mean students

have changed their minds about the slate system? Neither Soper nor current SU president Nolan Astley thinks so.

"I think people evaluated each position individually and came to the conclusion that one slate had the best candidates," Soper said.

Astley said he didn't think the result meant anything about the slate system.

"I wouldn't go so far as to call it a vote of confidence in the slate system," he said.

As to the high voter turnout, both hoped it was the beginning of a trend. Soper suggested the issues were more clearly defined this year than they have been in the past. SU finances, funding cutbacks, and North Garneau development were among these issues, he said.

"These are things people could see, and touch the results," he said.

Soper said his new executive has four major goals: to straighten out SU finances; to help the university in its funding battle with the provincial government; to help student housing associations develop a central bargaining agent ("They need some sort of collective bargaining power"); and to increase political awareness on campus.

Soper promised, with respect to the last goal, to get the SU back into the business of promoting forums, which only the Political Science Undergrad Association and the Law Association now do on a regular basis.

He said he thinks students should be more aware of politics in Canada and Alberta. He is a former contributor to the Progressive Conservative party, and Lisa Walter, vp external-elect, is a supporter of the New Democratic Party.

The new executive takes office April 1.

## U of A approves fee hike FAS squeaks in

A bare majority of U of A voters support giving the Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) more money.

Only 52.7 percent of voters in Friday's referendum approved a hike in their FAS fees from \$1.50 to \$3.50 per year; 2,308 of 4,379 students who voted on the FAS fee approved the planned increase.

The close result was a surprise to FAS campaigners, who had encountered little fierce opposition during the campaign.

"There may have been some (anti-FAS feeling), but not the entire 40 percent," said SU vice-president external Kris Farkas. "It would have come out. People would have been asking questions in classrooms, in the forums, and in Lister Hall."

FAS fieldworker Anne McGrath agreed: "Every indication was that we would have no real problems."

Both Farkas and McGrath said they thought FAS might have fared better had there been an anti-FAS campaign.

"When an anti-FAS force springs up, it's fairly easy to deal with, because their arguments aren't very rational," McGrath said. "Since nobody organized against us... the (anti-FAS) sentiment was allowed to grow without being public. So there was nothing we could fight against."

The fee increase must be passed at every member campus in Alberta before the students at those campuses can be forced to pay the higher fee. Ten more campuses must vote on it by next spring.

"I think it's fair to say right now that it would be difficult at the U of C," McGrath said. If U of C students don't approve the increase, FAS can still increase its fee. Then however, it will

have to go to U of C students again to ask them to decide on membership with a \$3.50 fee or no membership at all.

## SU gets \$85,000 boost

The Students' Union will have an extra \$85,000 to play around with next year.

Students voted Friday 66 percent in favor of raising their SU fees from \$35.50 to \$40.50 per year. Two dollars of the \$5 increase is earmarked for student services improvements, \$3 for a capital reserve fund. Part time students will pay \$2 more, for a total of \$12.50, the increase to be devoted to services.

SU president Nolan Astley was "elated" with the result, he said. "I think it means there's a fairly positive feeling toward the Students' Union."

Students' Union insiders were surprised that both the SU and FAS fee referenda were passed. Most had expected students to vote for one or the other, but not both. And most had also expected the FAS referendum, which was just barely passed (52.7 percent in favor), to get far more votes than the SU referendum.

However, the SU referendum got 2,935 votes to FAS' 2,308.

Astley said the extra money is not the solution to the SU's financial problems, though. The SU businessness will have to start making profits before the trouble is over. (Last fiscal year, the SU totalled a \$320,000 deficit.)

"This is not a cure-all," Astley said. "We could spend the whole capital thing

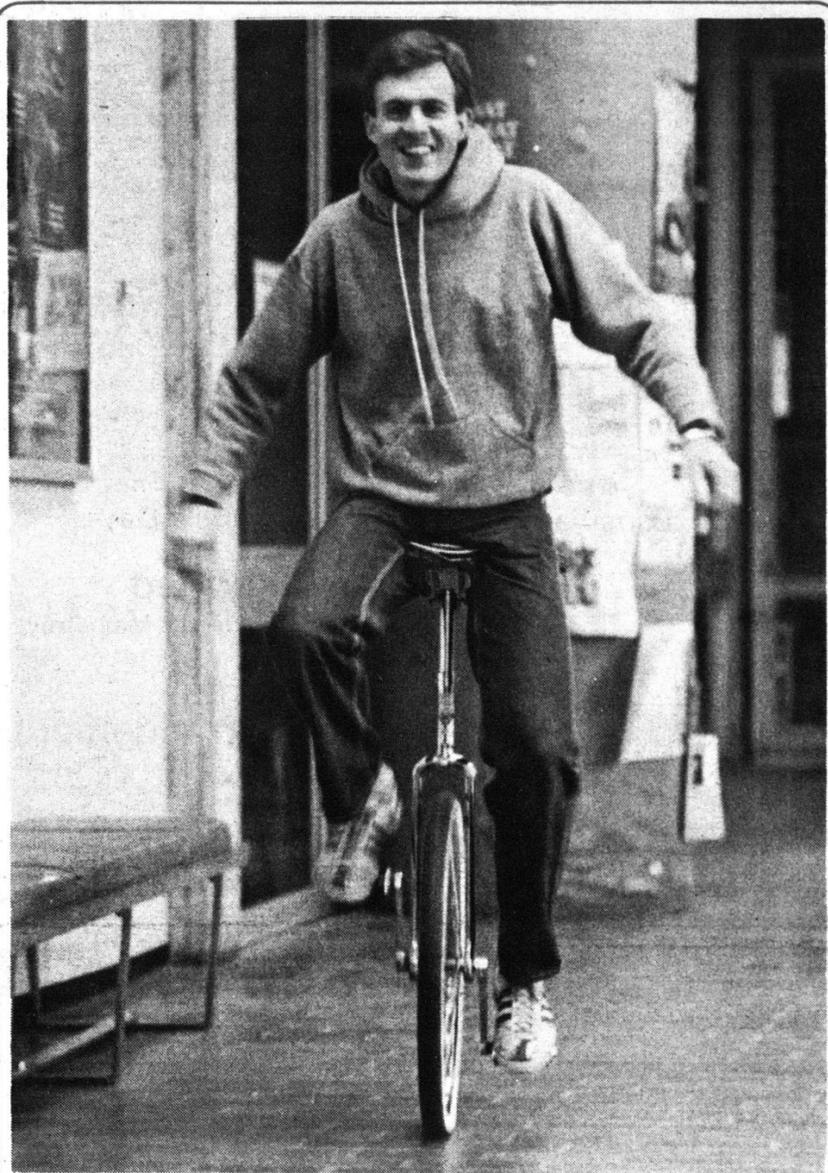


photo Ray Ciguere

*The dealing is over but not the wheeling. Grant Paterson, pictured, has the right idea, especially when it's -25°C outside.*

(about \$50,000 next year) three times over in one year."

Fridays restaurant in HUB has been one of the most frequently mentioned candidates this year for capital expenditures. The SU fears that it will lose money continuously unless Fridays is refurbished and upgraded.

Earlier, some students worried that the proceeds from the fee increase would be channelled into the SU's overdraft account with the university, its banker. After last year's deficit, the SU owed the

university several hundred thousand dollars. And by the end of this fiscal year in April, it will probably still owe well over \$200,000.

Students repeated this concern during the campaign, Astley said: "There was a fair amount of concern as to what the money would be used for... There was a lot of concern about the debt."

SU president-elect Phil Soper and his slate said during the election campaign that they planned not to pour the fee increase into the overdraft.

## 'Don't like it, but they're interested.' Paper to get autonomy

MONTREAL (CUP)The McGill Daily has moved one step closer to autonomy. The proposal, which was approved at council meeting Feb. 4, will be put to a referendum in a month's time.

The new system will establish a publications society governed by a board of directors. The board will be composed of four student representatives chosen in campus wide elections and three representatives elected by the Daily staff.

The change would make the Daily legally and editorially autonomous from the student society.

Opposition to the proposal came from law representative to council Ted Claxton who said he opposed the move because he believed more restrictions should be placed on the board of directors.

Arts representative Sean McAlister said he was worried that no students would want to serve on the board.

Council executive member Terry Anderson says it differently.

"The Daily arouses some passion in the study body. People are interested. They may not like the Daily, but they're interested."