

Brunswickan questions presidential candidates

1. What is the top priority of your election platform?

Galoska: The top priority of my election platform would have to be to finish off the work that we started in connection with the Students Loans and bursaries.

McKenzie: I cannot identify one top priority in my platform since there are several areas which should be considered in that category. They are: obtaining a more equitable student aid program, which is particularly necessary as costs to students increase; lobbying the government to proclaim the new Residential Tenancies Act, and initiating action in other areas of housing to insure adequate student accommodation; opening the office of the president and making it more responsive to student wishes.

Neil: To have the Student Representative Council do the best for the students who elected it.

Pratt: A Student Aid program which is beneficial to all students is the major concern that I will bring to the office of SRC President. Despite the present situation I believe I can bring a fresh approach to the situation and succeed where others have not.

2. Due to a high (\$1,100) ceiling on New Brunswick student grants-in-aid, it is believed some students are discouraged from applying for loans or find the free bursary inaccessible. Others borrow beyond their means. The provincial government has indicated they are considering hiking the ratio even higher. What do you feel is the best solution? Are there other alternatives? Do you have any suggestion why the government responded with a counter proposal which seemed the opposite of what students were requesting? How would you bring about change? Outline the exact methods, such as your preference to handle negotiations quietly or to direct letter campaigns, demonstrations, media pressure, petitions, etc.

Galoska: (a) I feel that the best solution is to reduce the loan-bursary ratio to a \$900.00 as we suggested to the Premier over the past month.

(b) I feel that is the only alternative at the present time.

(c) I believe that the government is presently reviewing the entire philosophy on student loans and this is where it is important that we get our opinions in before they completely revise their opinions according to what they think.

(d) Mr. Halfield reads the Brunswickan and, as such, I would prefer not to tell him what our strategy is going to be. However, I will say that we will proceed with a mixture of media pressure, petitions, and negotiations.

McKenzie: I feel the best solution to the student aid question is making funds available to those who need it most without forcing them to pay a crippling debt after graduation. Higher total student aid levels and a better loan to bursary ratio is a must particularly as costs to students increase. As a member of the group which met with the government I think part of the problem is that the meeting was a bit rushed and we were not as prepared as we should have been.

The method I would use to bring about change would centre on the New Brunswick universities acting as a group in lobbying the provincial government. The Atlantic Federation of Students, of which I am interim chairman, will play a large role in this and provide a vehicle for discussions with the federal government. I would prefer to negotiate a loan program beneficial to all students. Other methods to be employed (ie. better campaigns...media pressure etc.) would depend on the stance taken by government.

Neil: In regard to student aid I would like to see the amount of the loan and bursary on an even par with each other. The maximum student loan right now is \$2,100, over four years that is \$8,400. If half of that could be in bursary or grant it would certainly help students.

The government is always willing to listen, but that is usually all they do; to get any noticeable change, students from the four universities of New Brunswick must speak together with one voice.

Pratt: I can improve on the manner in which student leaders conducted recent discussions with the provincial government concerning the student loan question. I believe it would be in the best interests of students if the loan ceiling of (\$1,100.00) would be dropped three hundred dollars to (\$800). I also know that any decrease in the loan ceiling would be in the best interest of students. Achieving a decrease would be the primary objective of my time as SRC President. The unfortunate reaction on the part of provincial politicians to recent student proposals is an understandable one because of the way in which the proposals were made. Before any written list of "demands" would be handed to the provincial government I believe that consultations should have

been held between student leaders and people in the Administrations of universities of New Brunswick. The student loan situation has an effect not only on students but on the universities as a whole. When I am elected I will immediately ask for a meeting with Dr. Anderson and with him work out a means by which the other university Presidents and student presidents can work together co-operatively in the good of all New Brunswick students. The fact that the university community could be instantly mobilized into a mass of better campaigners, demonstrators, or petitioners is a fact of which I am sure the provincial government does not have to be reminded. The implied threat is there, but it should not be brought up as a possibility. I believe consultation not confrontation, conversation not conflict are the two essential factors for success in this important issue.

3. There has been speculation tuition rates will go up due to inflation. How should the president and the SRC in general act to insure the hike—if it comes—is minimal and one which the student will feel justified in absorbing? Are there alternatives such as a change in the system of government financing for post-secondary institutions?

Galoska: (a) As far as residence fees go, there is bound to be an increase in fees due to the cost of food going up again over the past year. As president, I have been actively involved this month in the negotiations of the residence food contract and, in this way, I am able to make sure that any increase is justified.

(b) Yes. If the government were willing to change their formula for financing this institution. At the present moment, the new Maritime High Education Commission is presently studying the Financing system.

McKenzie: Should tuition be raised I feel that the SRC president should seek from the administration justification for the amount of increase. This information should be presented to the SRC for full discussion and recommendation since this is an area which will seriously affect all students. I have been involved as an SRC councillor, External Co-ordinator and as a Student Senator. I want to remain involved. There are many projects which I would like to initiate and I want the opportunity to do so. Certainly having been president will provide experience upon which I can draw after the completion of my university education.

As pertains to this job I feel perhaps my most serious failing is a tendency to always "talk shop."

Neil: Tuition at UNB is bound to go up. Fees at this university have not been raised since 1969 and still we have one of the lowest rates in Canada. Inflation has hit hard everywhere, day-to-day living costs have increased drastically as we are all aware of. If fees go up I think students should be informed why and shown where their money is going and how it is to be spent.

Pratt: I believe that Dr. Anderson and the Administration are attempting to minimize any potential increase in tuition. My job as SRC President would be to make sure that the SRC would be kept fully aware of any movement towards an increase in tuition. By doing this I do not think that the SRC would condemn any actions taken to lessen the potential burden on students. I believe the idea of paying for sports events is a means by which the general student population is not being asked to subsidize the Athletic Dept. by an increase in tuition. If Council had looked at the situation in that light I think Council would have agreed with the Athletic Advisory Board's decision to pay a fee to certain athletic events.

4. Outline your personal motives for running for president. What personal failings or weaknesses do you see could effect in any way your ability to act as president?

Galoska: As I look over the past year, I see that the Union has been able to achieve a lot of good things for the campus. I, personally, have learned a tremendous amount and have made many contacts on the campus which, I feel would help me to accomplish all the more in the coming year. If it were not for this feeling of accomplishment, the job would be worth nothing to me. As far as personal weaknesses go, I tend sometimes to have a very short fuse with people who bitch without knowing all the facts.

McKenzie: I have been involved as an SRC councillor, External Co-ordinator and as a student senator. I want to remain involved. There are many projects which I would like to initiate and I want the opportunity to do so. Certainly having been president will provide experience upon which I can draw after the completion of my university education.

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Neil: I'm running for president for several reasons.

Personal gratification for one, an honest desire to try and do what's best for the student body is the other. **Pratt:** I think students are getting a raw deal right now. People in student government now appear to be working at odds against one another. I can build a sense of co-operation and communication between student representatives, students and Administration officials. This new and viable approach to student government is guaranteed to be of benefit to each and every student on campus. Trusting and having faith in the people around me would be a personal weakness. I have expectations of people around me and I will work as SRC President as the of a team not as ringmaster of a three ring circus.

5. Rents in Fredericton will probably go up. Accommodations are scarce for students and there are few measures which can be taken to establish comprehensive standards of housing. As Fredericton expands, people with more money to spend will compete with students for off-campus accommodation. What should be done to alleviate or respond to all these problems? Explain what needs to be done to landlord and tenant legislation, how input with the dean of students will do any good and what negotiation needs to be conducted with the three levels of government. What other measures should be examined? What are the precise ways which you would employ to promote the change which you see is needed?

Galoska: The Landlord and Tenants Act in New Brunswick is presently weighted completely in favour of the Landlord but the government is now drafting a new Landlord-Tenants Act which would be far more equitable to the tenant. This year, the Union has been interested in this new legislation and has anxiously awaited its presentation to the legislature. As far as housing provided by the University, the S.R.C. President presently sits on a number of committees which deals with campus housing. Under consideration at the moment are additional residences, a student village (which has had to be shelved temporarily due to sky residences. As far as input to the Dean of Students is concerned, it already exists in many many ways. All of these committees are concerned with recommending to the University's Board of Governors exactly what kind of housing would be most suitable for the most number of students and also the most economical.

McKenzie: Rents in Fredericton will almost definitely go up. With the opening of the new hospital in close proximity to the campus many student beds will probably be lost to hospital staff.

There is a need for a survey to determine exactly what housing there is at present. The SRC must then make student needs clearly known to the university planners. Plans for a new student village have been "shelved" due to increasing costs and there has been talk of a new residence. At the present time it does not appear that funds are available. The New Brunswick Higher Education Commission was averse to providing funds for residence construction but the new Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission does not yet.

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