

The 1996 General Election Edition

by Joe FitzPatrick
Co-News Editor

The Brunswickan is proud to present its 1996 General Election Special Edition.

The News department (Gordon Loane, Cynthia Kirkby and myself) divided up the Student Union Executive positions and had lengthy interviews with the candidates.

Each candidate was asked a series of questions according to the position for which they were running. All interviews were taped. As much as possible, what appears on the following pages are verbatim transcripts of those interviews. Although some editing for grammar or clarity was done.

For each position, you will find an introduction and commentary by myself regarding the position and the candidates.

While at first glance some candidates appear to have "more space" than another for the same position – this is a consequence of the length and comprehensiveness of the answers given. There were no time limits imposed on answers.

I realize that this Special Edition consists of lengthy passages of prose – and, is, at times, drawn out. However, I beseech every serious

student who is reading this (which the latest readership indicates is as much as 95% of the University community) who may be in that group of 4 out of 5 students who do not normally vote in UNB Student Union elections – read the material and make your decision.

In a word – don't ignore these elections because you're too busy with your degree or your class or your after class time. Don't ignore them for the garish colour of the ubiquitous campaign posters you revile. Don't ignore them because the first voting day is April Fool's.

Simply put – you have nothing else. The UNB Student Union, is vested with the authority to "act as the official organization of the students of the University of New Brunswick." That means one thing – they are all you've got.

Some may see this as a downside, but, in fact, since the Union is nothing but the students who run it, the potential is tremendous. The field of candidates for President, especially, has not been so broad in at least a decade.

Granted, the Union has had some problems this year, but they are mostly structural. In ten years, the Union has expanded exponentially, but the policies of a \$250,000

company now govern a \$700,000 one. The Constitution has not been re-evaluated since 1989. The Student Union's Act of Incorporation has not been seriously considered (if it ever was) since 1966.

Current President Kelly Lamrock feels that the Student Union has grown enough to warrant a full-time President. This issue, among others will be decided by you, the electorate.

The Student Union's original structure never envisioned a student Pub, credit cards for the Executive, cellular phones, going over budget by 500%, or resignations of Councilors en-masse.

We can't be too quick to fault the Councilors of this year personally. They, as students before them, were thrown into a situation over which they felt they had little control, where certain influences had a vested interest in keeping these students unaware of their powers.

Experience is not necessarily an asset, however. The field of candidates proves that. Of the 14 candidates for Executive, only 2 have experience at the Executive level of the Student Union. Only 5 have served on Council, and only half have had any involvement with Council.

There is the potential for a massive

change in direction for the Student Union. This election is your chance to enhance or diminish this opportunity to push for change or ratify the status quo.

There is a ripe crop of Councilors, eager (we all hope) to move the Union beyond those incidents and situations which have hung like a palor around a Council which could have been.

The number of Faculty Representative Candidates is encouraging on some fronts, discouraging on others.

The Engineers put out the call to the faithful with a massive e-mail campaign and gathered 11 candidates for 4 positions – a tremendous example of the potential of just a little effort.

I absolutely refuse to believe that in a faculty the size of Education or Science, nearly 750 each, that not a single person wants to make a difference in student government at UNB. Heck, for the first time in my four years, there is a full slate of Arts representatives for the General Election – that counts for something.

There are a few sour notes, as always. While the students at the Nursing satellite campuses in Moncton and Bathurst will be able to vote by mail-in ballots, they won't

have a Faculty representative from Nursing.

There are persistent problems in some faculties—and it's not as simple as apathy. Several faculties, like Computer Science, Education, and Nursing, have practical work experience which can effect dramatically, the time that a student can devote to peace, order, and good student government.

The basic message, however, is not to ignore any of this. It's too easy to see the headlines and forget the story underneath.

This Special Edition would not have been possible without the efforts of our News department (Gordon Loane, Cynthia Kirkby, and Joe FitzPatrick), the rapid fingers of our Business Manager, Janice McConnell and the rest of *The Brunswickan* staff. A special thanks goes to Managing Editor Neil Duxbury, who designed the cover and the funky collages for the positions. Honourable mention to Michael Edwards for the "Kelly buck" [Yes, we finally used it!]

Six for President of the Union

News Commentary
by Joe FitzPatrick
Co-News Editor

Six students are looking to become the next President of the UNB Student Union. Six students want to hold the highest office in student government at UNB.

The Presidency, as an office, is the most important Executive position. Not only does it carry the most authority, it also carries the most responsibility.

It is the duty of the President to provide leadership to the Council and to the other Executives. It's important, however, that they not be overbearing. This tempered leadership is especially important when it comes to dealing with a Council with little or no experience as Councilors. It is the duty of the President to guide the efforts of Council, and sometimes, be as much a follower as a leader.

Traditionally, the President of the Union has been a previous Executive of the Student Union. The last four, excepting Lamrock, have been Vice Presidents, of them, all were Vice Presidents (Finance and Administration.)

This year, however, the race is different. It is highly contested, with more candidates than in recent memory. In addition, of the six, four have not held executive positions with the Student Union.

It is clearly an outsiders' race. It remains to be seen whether the electorate will latch on to the alternative to the status quo, however.

The candidates are divided on several of the key issues including compensation for Executives. Clark says 40 hours per week at nine or ten dollars an hour. Davis, Hellmeister, and Melanson feel it should be increased, but not so much. Collins and Rice feel levels are adequate as they are.

The issue has come to a head with the campaign. The winner will, of course have the option of taking the

salary increase or not.

Current President Kelly Lamrock, when the Council was debating whether to restrict the course loads of Executive by an amendment to the Bylaws, summed up the debate as he sees it.

"When it comes right down to it," he said. "It's whether you think we're big enough to have a President who doesn't hold the office as a hobby – I think we are."

The new President will also have the awesome task of SUB Expansion moving again. The project has lost much of its momentum this year, and it's at the point that some students are openly questioning the project. Hopefully, the incoming President will be willing to take a strong stance and push the University towards the ground-breaking.

Another issue of primary importance will be how the new Executives at both UNB and St. Thomas deal with the now "chilly" climate between the two campuses since SUB Expansion failed once again at STU (a second referendum had been planned, but further investigated led to the conclusion that it had to be postponed until Fall.) Lamrock indicated to UNB Council that, basically, "everything is under review."

Historically, UNB and STU have gotten on quite well, when their interests have overlapped, and the new STU President, Carrie Ricker, appears more than willing to look at UNB-STU partnerships. STU is understandably wary of the larger, more dynamic, and, at times, more erratic, UNB Student Union. UNB is understandably hurt at the messages of the SUB referendum "NO" side, which was, in Lamrock's words "UNB butt out!"

That being the case, there is a delicate political balance which must be struck, if the two Student Union are to combine their strengths in joint ventures, such as the New Brunswick Student Alliance (UNB and STU make up 66% of it combined, by population).

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president

STU: "NO" to SUB Expansion
Council kills deal with Zoomers

Two of the candidates for President say
UNBSU President should be full-time

"Nine or ten dollars an hour is a reasonable amount. A \$15,000 - \$18,000 salary is not too much money for working 40 hours a week for a year."

SUB to include movie theatre?

The President of the Union shall:

- be the Chief Executive Officer of the Union and be charged with the general management of the Union;
- provide direction and leadership for the advancement and promotion of the objectives of the Union;
- be the official spokesperson for the Union;
- act as a liaison between the Union and the University Administration, Brunswickan Publishing Inc., and the Student Union Building.
- in the event of a vacancy in any other Executive position, oversee the duties of that office.
- present a report of all activities undertaken on behalf of the Union at all regular meetings of the Council;
- present an annual report to the Council before leaving office;
- undertake a public meeting in each residence at least once in the fall and winter terms;
- be a non-voting member of all standing and ad hoc committees of the Council unless otherwise appointed to the committee;
- fulfill such other duties as do not properly fall to any other officer.