

# And if I'm elected Students

The Students' Union of the University of Alberta is an ostensibly democratic institution whose mandate is to serve the needs of the undergraduate student populace.

Unfortunately, being a democracy means you have to hold elections. To be able to rationally participate in said elections, you should be equipped with certain types of information - like the names of the candidates and where they stand on issues that affect you.

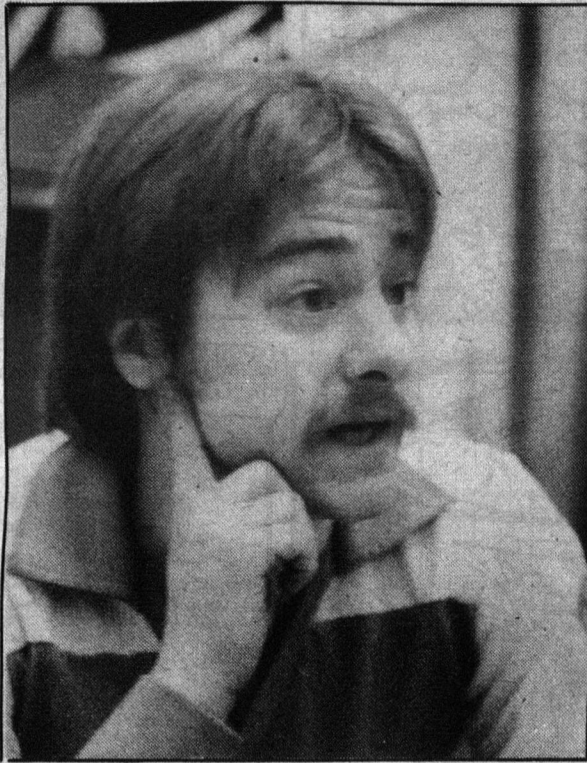
In the case of the current election, we have devoted a rather large amount of space to deal with the presidential candidates. Why? Because the president fulfills several important roles:

S/he must have the ability to balance the desirable with the achievable, to ensure the executive committee, managers and students' council are working in the best interests of the students and to be a strong, effective advocate of students' concerns and interests to a society that often feels our problems are at most overrated and at worst, self-indulgent snivelling.

To examine the candidates, their qualities and their stands on issues, Gateway news editors Ann Grever and Bill Daskoch spent two hours of their Sunday interviewing Steven Mather (S.M.) of Tabula Rasa, Dave Oginski (D.O.) of Positive Perspectives '86, Peter Seseck (P.S.) of Students Working for Students, Michael Solonyko (aka Mike Firebutton or M.F.) and Jayson Woodbridge (J.W.) of The Woodbridge Slate. Peter Willette of Godiva's Heroes did not attend.

Hopefully, the views provided within will help you make an informed decision in the best democratic tradition.

Photographs by Rob Schmidt



Steve Mather

**Why are you qualified to be president, what will your leadership style be, and what do you perceive your weaknesses to be?**

**JW:** What I think qualifies me for the position is that I have sat on students' council, I have been there every time, and I know how the system works.

I have sat on the Building Services Board, I now sit on the External Affairs Board, and so I know how the boards work.

My style will be to get to know what the students want, use public opinion polling, use the council, and go for what the student body wants on campus and be clear and direct about it.

I guess my weaknesses are going to be the same as anyone else's... I can't know all information at all times. I guess anyone in the room here would be in the same situation. As far as my personal weaknesses go, I like British ale and I guess that could be considered a personal weakness. I don't think I have a great deal of weaknesses as far as leadership style goes, I believe in just getting what the students want up front. Once you've done that you can't have a great deal of squabbles if you know what the campus wants. So, you just go directly for what they need, what they want as students. If you can do that, I think you are meeting your goal.

**DO:** I've been involved myself with my own faculty for the last couple of years. I've sat on the committee between students and faculty on accreditation boards for a degree in math and through this I've been able to learn ways of how to get things done for students through the faculty, and what's been going on through the GFC and the Board of Governors.

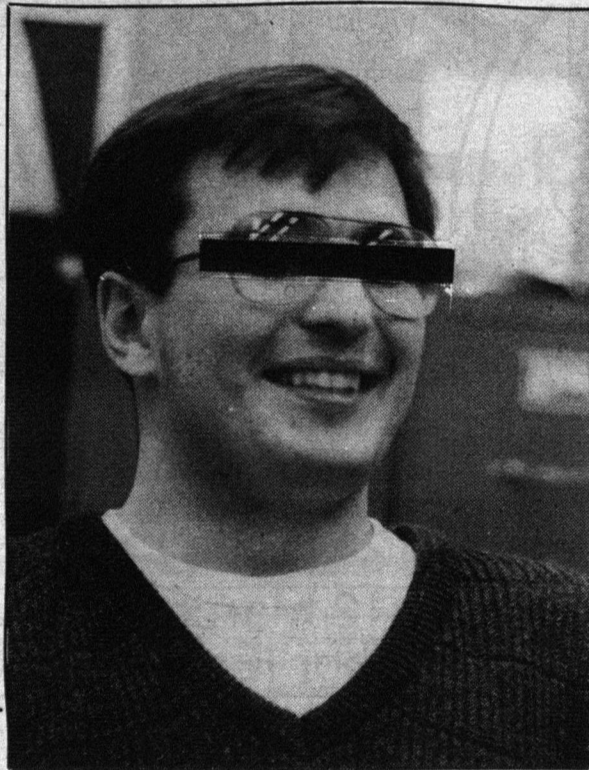
My style of leadership will not be very aggressive. I'm pretty laid back, but I do get things done. I will be there when students need me, I'll be getting things done behind the scenes and I'll be administering what should be done in each of the portfolios.

Weakness? I think the biggest one right now is being from engineering. The thing is, a lot of people feel engineers are sexist pigs. I don't think this is true. I think I'm a very approachable person, I'm very qualified, and I have strong leadership skills. I think if anything, my being an engineer would be a slight advantage because I've been working under extreme pressure [in my program]. So I think when people get to know me it will no longer be my weakness.

**Mike Firebutton on behalf of candidate, Mr. Impact:** OK, I'm speaking for Mr. Impact because he is rather indisposed now. I've been counselled not to say anything until his condition has stabilized. OK, I'm going to talk about Mr. Impact. Here is a born leader. He is a strong, charismatic individual who possesses frequent delusions of grandeur. This, however, will not cloud his perspective because he is aware that he is the only candidate capable of getting things done in a flash.

As president, Rich will be available for an informal chat anytime. A glowing example of Richard's sensibility is the regularity with which he keeps his schedule. When not walking about campus in an amiable haze, he can usually be found at one of the local watering holes.

Remember, for your vote to have it's most



Mike Firebutton

powerful impact, Rich is the only choice

**SM:** I believe in consensus, not in conflict. I don't believe, if I'm in an adversarial role with the counterparts I have in students' council or anyone I'm negotiating with, that I will be able to accomplish very much. However, if I'm willing to sit down and objectively listen to their points of view, I think that will garner respect for me and they will be able to listen to my points of view. Once you reach that common ground you can start accomplishing things.

I'm also a very approachable and well rounded individual. I've competed in sports, running track and field for the Golden Bears. I've helped with Freshman Introductory Week and I've become a fraternity member.

What I would perceive as the weaknesses in my campaign is perhaps the way that I'm running it. But that's because I perceive the students as seeing people who generally run for Students' Union as being nitpicking and backbiting. As an example I've even had somebody tell me that they'd like to get me disqualified because they think that I'm going to take votes away, so they can find any way they can to disqualify me if they will. And I suggest that people who think in that vein would not be very good at representing students and forwarding any of our proposals. They wouldn't be able to accomplish what students would perceive as desirable things for this campus.

So basically my weakness is a lack of experience with Students' Union politics,

but I have worked on other political campaigns with other individuals, so I do have some experience in the political realm.

**PS:** In the last couple of years I've been carefully observing what has been going on in the Students' Union and what I've seen for the most part hasn't been exactly what I think the majority of students want. I feel I represent a fair majority of the students on campus who believe the SU hasn't done everything they promised they would. I hope to implement some kind of new spirit and new honesty between the students and the executive on council. If I'm in office I will look to a positive attitude with people I'm working with, with the administration and with the government. If you don't go with a positive attitude right from the start, I don't believe you can get anything accomplished. I believe it's the duty of the executive to appear united and to follow through with what we believe in to find out as much about each thing we would want to implement, if the students really want the changes, and really want the services. As a result, that means slowing down some of the things we promised, while assuring ourselves that the students really do want these things in the exact form that we propose. Hopefully, however, by the end of January of '87 we would have implemented everything that we proposed.

**What is your present academic standing including the WCT?**

**PS:** Presently I'm third year business...I'm taking five courses. Yes (I've passed the WCT).

**SM:** Presently I'm in education, and I'm taking five courses. In the first term my average was 7.2, and as far as the WCT goes, because I attended university before it was implemented, I was not required to take the test.

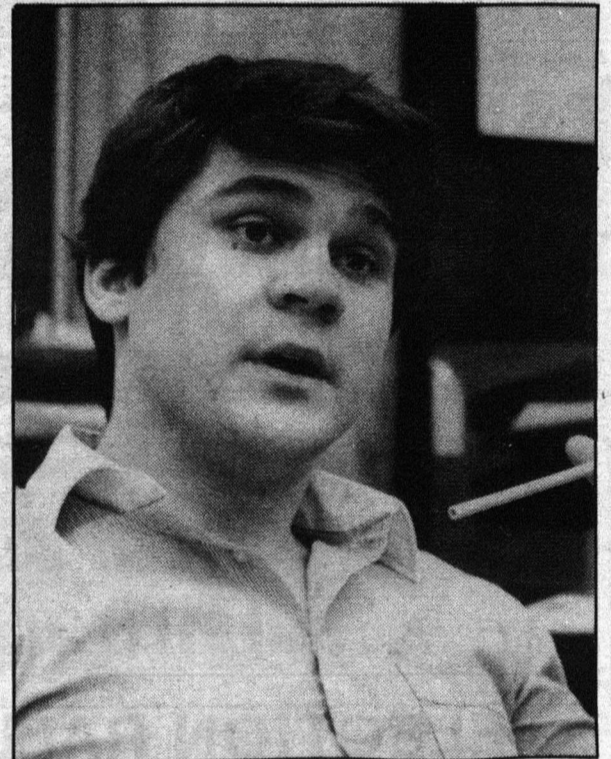
**MF:** I'm not too aware of Mr. Impact's academic standing however I know he is registered at this institution, and he does indeed attend classes. As far as his writing test goes, I assume he has taken it, as he speaks well and writes real good. I was lucky enough to come to this campus long ago when the writing competency test wasn't even heard of.

**DO:** I'm in the faculty of Engineering, taking five credit courses. I had a 6 average in the last term. I enrolled in university before it was mandatory to take the WCT, but I have taken and passed the mandatory English course in the department.

**JW:** I'm taking five courses. As far as the Writing Competency Test goes, I wrote it last September, and I did not pass it. That's fine because a lot of other people didn't pass it either.

**What is the most important problem facing students?**

**JW:** I think the most important problem



Dave Oginski