



Lisa Hall

BSA referendum undemocratic

Students in Business will be voting in a referendum this Thursday to decide whether or not to start a student giving program. If more students vote 'yes' than 'no', students will be forced to donate about \$75 per year to their faculty.

It is up to Business students to decide if they like the idea of student giving, but the way they have been allowed to decide is totally undemocratic. How can the organization responsible for running the referendum, the Business Students' Association, also be the group representing the 'yes' side of it?

The BSA has been able to prepare their side of the referendum since

the summer, while the students who have attempted to organize the 'no' side learned of the referendum last week, after seeing posters and class presentations supporting the 'yes' side. This hardly gave them time to research the issue and find information to campaign against the powerful 'yes' side, which also had faculty support.

If the 'no' side had time to look into the student giving program, they could have found out how the University of Manitoba runs their referenda on student giving. There, the Students' Union allocates equal funds to groups who want to take on the yes and no sides of the campaign. Each group is given equal comments time to prepare and

present their campaigns. Faculty members can help answer questions on how the program will work, but they cannot give financial support.

When our Students' Union holds a referendum, much the same process is employed. The referendum question is publicized beforehand, and anyone who wishes to represent either side of the issue may seek nomination to do so. SU executives are not allowed to participate on either side. Both sides receive equal funding and have an equal amount of time to prepare. If no one wants to present one side or the other, then that's too bad, but at least the opportunity was there for someone to present the case.

The process of the Business referendum has gone completely against these rules. The BSA, or the governing body over business students, has taken a side. The referendum has become their mandate for the semester. No notice was given to students who wanted to represent the other side. This side has no faculty support and is disorganized—there is no official 'no' side—there are just a few students who have taken time from their schooling to fight against the referendum question.

The BSA not only had more time to prepare their side, but also had more resources. Other than receiving money from the faculty for fancy handouts and posters (the 'vote no' posters are photocopies), the BSA's newspaper *The Flasher* dedicated this month's edition to saying 'vote yes!', including a front-page editorial on the subject.

Perhaps *The Flasher* has no obligation to impartiality, but it has given the 'yes' side another strong advantage over the diminutive 'no' campaign. On top of the posters, pamphlets, and presentations, the 'yes' side is getting twelve extra

broadsheet pages of free press from a publication whose budget is allocated at the beginning of the year. It's hard to knock the BSA and the faculty for trying to find innovative ideas to raise money, and the idea of student giving may not be a bad one, but this referendum process is an absolute farce. The results of the referendum can't be taken to mean anything because the democratic process has been overlooked.

According to the administration, this proposal has to be ratified by the Board of Governors before it can be implemented. If the B of G has not determined what criteria to use to approve the referendum results, they should consider how democratic and fair the process has been. If they do consider this, there is no way the B of G will approve the referendum, even if students vote in favour of it.

Then the Business referendum will go where it belongs—back to the drawing board. Because this question is so important, the referendum needs to take place, but it needs to be done right.

LETTERS continued

Reformers clarify Meech policy

Re: Mr. Preville's comments on Mr. Manning and Meech Lake

If a childish policy on Meech Lake and Quebec can attract over a quarter of a million voters, Mr. Preville must be one of the few adults in Alberta. Mr. Preville accuses Preston Manning, and the Reform Party, of an emotionally laden and simplistic approach to the issue of Quebec. However, whereas we will cite specific factual examples to back up the reason for Mr. Manning's stance, Mr. Preville lacks any valid evidence to base his statements on. His commentary is devised from a secondary eastern

based source, *The Edmonton Journal*, which misrepresented Mr. Manning's quote to begin with. Obviously Mr. Preville has neither heard Mr. Manning speak nor bothered to pick up a copy of the actual speech presented, which is available to anyone.

The Reform Party's position is based on contradictory legislation which has been passed in both the House of Commons and Quebec. In Bill 72 Canada, save Quebec, has made a valid attempt to promote official bilingualism. This has not been reciprocated by Quebec. In their passing of Bill 101, a unilingual language policy, and Bill 178, a

French priority sign law, they have effectively agreed not to co-operate in a bilingual Confederation. Mr. Manning's position is that this co-operation is essential for a unified Canada.

What Quebec and Mr. Preville are preposing is a double standard. If Quebec is a "distinct society" is the rest of Canada a "non-distinct society"? Mr. Manning is said to have "clouded the issue with emotion", but if expressing an alternative viewpoint to the problem is "clouding the issue" then where is there room for democracy in Canada?

The Reform Party Students Society

Chomsky chastise challenged

Mr. John Staples went too far in his slashing critique of Noam Chomsky's latest work, *Necessary Illusions*.

The work is an analysis of media, so Mr. Staples should not have been too surprised to find a healthy number of quotations within — he was. The rebuke handed Mr. Chomsky for quoting himself seems a little misguided as well. Central America is a topic Chomsky has written on extensively and knows well. Should a scholar be chastised for referring to what he or she has said before?

But the greatest failing of this review is its complete misrepresentation of the intent of the work. The lunacy of the following statement, made by Staples, is not apparent unless you have read the book: "he never adequately attempts to show active coercion of the press by the powerful." *Necessary Illusions* makes it plain that, in a democracy, control of the press cannot be active (let alone coercive).

Chomsky's point is this: control of the press, and by implication control of thought, is done through selectively and carefully presenting information to the press. Government sets the rules of the game and media play along.

A personal vendetta? No. A fascinating analysis and a good read? Yes.

John Watson
Education III

Re: John Staples' "Chomsky stabs..."

The muddled confusion, which the reviewer of Noam Chomsky's *Necessary Illusions* suffers under due to "Chomsky's style", may be cleared up quite easily. Unlike the media, which are never required to name their sources (eg. "government sources indicate", "one observer noted"), articles or books which go against or beyond the general or accepted view of the world must back everything they write with evidence, including

quotations from respected (and named) sources; this is the essence of scholarly writing, something the media at large, including the review, lacks. Perhaps the reviewer could have backed up some of his observations (eg. "Often the statements quoted are either insensitive or outright stupid...") by at least referring the reader to specific examples, or even, at least, page numbers. But, alas (alak, anon, asunder), as Chomsky writes: "convenient mythologies require neither evidence nor logic (*Manufacturing Consent*, p. 292)."

WH Reimer
Grad Studies
Dept. of Germanic Languages

Postcards pushed

Over the past five months the Edmonton Caucus of Post-Secondary students has been working closely with Edmonton Transit Service and the City of Edmonton to obtain a more economical monthly transit pass for students. Under the present system a student must pay \$137.00 for a four month Student-Pak. It is our feeling that this option is no longer a viable alternative for the students of Edmonton. Transit ridership has been dropping drastically in recent years and people are looking for an alternative.

The Students' Union postcard

campaign is aimed at increasing student awareness about the issue while at the same time demonstrating support for the initiative. I would strongly encourage all students to sign a card at the Info Booths the proposal for a monthly discounted student pass will be discussed at the November 14th City Council meeting. Show your support in the effort to get students a better deal!

John Mark Fisher
Chair, Inter-Campus Lobby Committee
Housing and Transport Commissioner.

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MARSHALL TULLY
and ROUSTABOUTS
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\$7 door

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SOUND CONNECTION
SOUTH SIDE SOUND
CJSR

sound:
All Star

Saturday Nov. 11
sunset club
(Ambassador)
10041-106 st.

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RESPIRATION
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