

## Which faculties actually vote?

by Dana Nyquist

An examination of voter turnout for the 1986 and 1987 Students' Union Elections reveals consistently low average voter turnout for the student body at large and a wide discrepancy in the number of Engineering votes for each year examined.

With 18 percent of the student body voting in last year's election, it appears that the majority of university students are apathetic towards who is elected to Students' Union Offices and what objectives are implemented once those offices are filled.

Gord Stamp, the 1984-85 VP Internal, cites the short duration of student life and the demands of studies as two of the main factors contributing to a lack of student involvement in Elections. Because of these factors, Stamp says that "(the students) don't know the issues... don't know that the Students' Union owns RATT, S.U. Records... that the Students' Union acquires a budget of approximately one million from student union fees." Stamp added that students who are uninformed about the issues often feel obligated not to vote.

However, the rise of Engineering votes in 1986 to double the number recorded for the '87 Elections reveals one of the possibly serious consequences of low student voter participation. The abnormal increase in the Engineering Faculty's voter participation for the '86 election year has been attributed to the candidacy of David Oginski for Student Union President. An en-

gineering student well-respected by his faculty, Oginski was able to mobilize the support of his faculty into an effective voting block. Without the counter balance of other equally effective faculty voting blocks, the opportunity for one faculty to determine student election results and create a Students' Union partial to the needs and interests of one faculty at the expense of others is a distinct possibility. As Stamp concluded, "When you are talking 2,000 Engineering students and you get 50 percent voter turnout, and if they are all voting the same way, it is almost impossible for anybody to overcome a 1,000 vote deficit."

In order to increase voter participation of all faculties, Stamp suggests coordinating referendum votes and/or faculty elections to coincide with Students' Union Elections. According to Stamp, the 1985 Students' Union Election coincided with the Building Policy Referendum, a policy which allowed the Students' Union to censor groups

or material arbitrarily, and voter participation for Union Elections that year jumped to 27 percent.

Furthermore, the year Union Elections coincided with Science Faculty elections more students turned out to vote than any year previous or since. However, Chief Returning Officer Craig Cooper doubted the practicality of holding all campus elections simultaneously. Besides the obvious logistical problems, Cooper doubts that such an election system would be manageable and says this could create mass voter confusion resulting in even less voter participation.

In order to increase student interest in their Students' Union, Stamp suggests promoting ways in which the Union can produce tangible, direct benefits to students. As an example, Stamp recalls the free hotdogs made available to students at the beer gardens four years ago and the responses made by many of them that "this was the first thing (their) Students' Union (had) given (them) in three years."

Voter turnout by faculty  
1987 election

Faculty	Number of Full time Undergrads	Number of votes cast	Percent Voting
Science	4234	1471	35%
Faculty S-J	374	118	32%
Agr/For	729	217	30%
Business	1538	458	30%
Arts	4817	1213	25%
Eng.	2166	460	21%
Home Ec.	426	71	17%
Education	3134	405	13%
Nursing	593	72	12%
Phys Ed	839	103	12%
Dentistry	268	30	11%
Law	526	59	11%
Medicine	1008	96	10%
Rehab Med	462	34	07%

## Posters pulled

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by the rules, nothing would go up," said Larson.

Larson rejected Zabel's claim that the posters were unconnected with the election.

"Any group on campus, if it is a student group, is allowed to use the boards freely, as long as they are an identifiable group... there is no policy here that says they cannot go up."

Zabel withheld comment on whether his actions were related to the gay rights content of the posters. "I have my reasons (for removing the posters), and I gave them to you," he said. "Anything else is hypothetical."

Larson noted that Zabel is not allowed to remove posters because of personal belief. "He may not like them, but he cannot censor that type of stuff. We have no right and no authority (to censor) and I wouldn't want it."

The Play the Leaders (PTL) slate has lodged a formal complaint that an unidentified organized group has been removing their posters.

"There's also a lot of souvenir hunters... we figure it's about half and half," said Jim Faker, Presidential candidate.

Apathy Slate VP External candidate Keith Apathy said, "People have been pulling our posters down all over campus and we just can't be bothered to put them back up, so it's been a real problem for our slate."

The "No" campaign has filed a complaint against the "Yes" side of the referendum, accusing them of "flagrantly taking down 'No' posters." The case has yet to be decided by Cooper.

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