

## election issues abound

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concerns of the faculty are addressed in the election.

"The ESA is powerful, and it can influence turnout and direction of voting, depending on what's at stake," said Goodnoo.

At the other end of the spectrum are faculties and groups who may be overrepresented in the elections. Engineering is often accused of being the faculty that student political hopefuls must toady to, up to the point of including a token "Geer" on their slate.

The structure of the program in engineering is such that involvement in all areas of the university seems to be encouraged. Faculty spirit is high (witness Engineering

Week), and so is attachment to the alma mater.

Engineers "care what happens to the university, they care what direction it goes in," noted Chief Returning Officer and one-time vp external Michael Hunter. "The Engineering program is a very hard one. They tend to be a very solidified unit...they get into (a network) with the faculty, with the clubs, with the club activities, and it carries right over into the election."

In recent years, however, election figures have not shown an overwhelming engineering vote: as the fourth largest faculty, their voting rank is around fourth every year (except in 1986, when Dave Oginiski, a very popular engineer, ran for president, and almost half the faculty turned out to vote).

The picture for voter participation may change this year. One of the reasons is the small field of candidates: two slates and one independent presidential can-

didate will be battling it out alone. The reason for this: there are no joke slates running in this year's race.

Joke slates have traditionally been one of the brighter spots of the election for students at large. They inject a little levity into what can be an all-too-serious process, and provide a recognizable, easy to follow sign that a campaign is actually being waged for all slates.

These slates, like everything else in the political process, have become more and more open to abuse. Election insiders note a number of joke slates that were designed to run in tandem with serious slates by focussing on the strong points of the opposition and undermining their support. Also, concerns over the amount of money spent by joke slates increased. Since the SU Election bylaw does not make a distinction between "joke" and "serious" slates, all slates were allowed the

same amount of student funds to run their campaign. For a five member slate, this meant \$1,150 of SU money to be spent on an eight-day campaign.

In the 1988 election, no fewer than three declared joke slates were campaigning. The PTL Slate, the Star Trek Slate, and the Apathy Slate bought T shirts, pens, matchbooks and baseball caps with their campaign funds, and at times had higher profiles than the serious slates.

This caused much consternation in the halls of the Students

Union, and a motion was passed in May to limit the participation of "non-serious" slates in the election process. To no one's surprise, no joke slates felt the new rules still made it worthwhile to run.

It is too soon to tell if the absence of joke slates will have an adverse impact on voter turnout. Popular joke candidates often receive enough votes to receive their deposit back (10 percent of the total voter turnout), and no one knows if the people who vote for joke slates will turn to serious candidates in lieu, or if they will merely not bother to vote at all.

## Budget funds explained

by Winston Pei

The Students' Union currently has over one and a half million dollars tucked away as protection against unforeseen expenditures.

The SU is constitutionally required to put funds into the Students' Union Building Expansion reserve, the Capitol Equipment reserve, and a general operations reserve, according to SU vp finance and administration Chris Welsh.

The SU constitution designates a required minimum of \$3.50 per student be put into the combined SUB and capitol equipment reserves. Its current balance of \$525,000 must be raised to \$675,000 by March 31 of this year, says Welsh. The funds are for "the construction of an extension or internal expansion" of SUB and "the purpose and replacement of capitol equipment belonging to the SU," according

to Constitution itself.

The general operations reserve, however, is not defined. Welsh admits that this reserve is constitutionally "a grey area", but he defends its need.

"The University of Alberta's efforts at reducing enrollment affects revenues. Raising the drinking age to 19 would affect alcohol revenues," says Welsh. "If these revenues are decreasing you need a cushion against unforeseen mishaps." He adds that the general operations reserve "could be lumped in with risk management."

The SU is required by the University to have \$5 million in insurance coverage. The Risk Management Reserve, which is the largest at \$800,000, is in place to cover a \$1 million shortfall in SU's coverage through conventional means.



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