Presidential race a predictable shame

DEMOCRACY TENDS TOWARDS MEDICRITY. THE SU ELECTIONS this year do not feature much new blood, but it does have two candidates who seem to have a shot at winning. The first is the SU President, Mike Medd, and the second is the SU Vice-President, Rebecca Medel. The campaign has been overshadowed by the recent political events, but the SU election is a chance to make a difference.

For an organization obsessed with running clean and fair elections, so much so that a candidate's volume spontaneously, 'maliciously' speaking to his own class after another candidate's leave can be considered grounds for disqualification, it's ignoring the hogs, dodgeball- obsessed students in the room. When the website goes up early because pre-campaigning is not allowed — but when a VP SU decides to run for the presidency, his near-year-long time in the hot seat is enough that pre-campaigning is not an issue at all.

Nobody else in the SU as is well known to the average student as the VP SU, because the other VPs, and the President as an extinct, largely worked behind the scenes. While the VP (or any other for that matter) is in charge of public relations and a part of the presidency, but not a direct candidate for it. There was no campaign for the presidency, in fact, most of the public relations work is being done by the candidates.

It's not that the Student Life portfolio is a easy gig, because organizing large events is difficult. At the same time, the SU has experienced support staff in place to facilitate these annual events. But when it comes to putting a face on the VP SU, it's happy to say "I organized that stuff!" And there is more to the job than just hosting a dodgeball game — looking at president-elect Colen Yamagishi, one of the few specific campaign promises that he did deliver on as VP SU, albeit in a slightly altered state, was getting an LGBTQ+ residence cohort effort started. But the point is, when it comes to the average voter, the guy who puts on the dodgeball game is famous for putting on a dodgeball game, not much of his other work.

It's far easier to host "dodgball," recall the awesome time you had at the game — or any of the other events — and cast your ballot than sit through a more involved discussion with someone who spent the year trying to influence government.

People might interpret this as an accusing voters of being stupid. The cynical me would agree. The more generous one would say, "students are just so busy." Either way, if students want the organization to which they pay membership fees to run at its best, they need to adjust their priorities.

Now, this is to say that a VP SU running for President is essentially any less deserving. Whence Debord started this recent trend, he did so with some good ideals. The dodgeball was done under his watch, and his efforts for mental health awareness and the Fall Reading Week are two of the things that define the SU today. With Tyige, we didn't really have a choice when it came to the president, but you have to give him points for stepping up.

But when it comes to Yamagishi, we saw a campaign consisting mainly of casual blogging and "I flagged a dodgeball game, with the election. Looking at his platform, the communications promise is the same tired thing we've heard year after year, and the information terminals and field/hockey camps are already something the SU has been working on. Then there was "resisting backdoor tuition," which is not much of a campaign promise in his job. Finally, under "regains past promises" he gave up any pretense of bringing anything new to the table, by pledging to continue doing the things his predecessors started. So in essence, his platform for the presidency can be summarized as, "I will keep doing things."

Adi Rao, who came in second place, would have taken the SU in the wrong direction — but at least he would have brought pandas to the job, which counts for something. And Farid Bishandar, who hands-down won the debate, would have brought all the real expertise and knowledge the job requires and, if his year as VP (External) can be used as evidence, would have excelled.

For all the genuine excitement of the last two weeks, and despite an overall roster of strong winners, it's a shame that the presidential race ended this way. The worst part is that it was a predictable shame. Anyone who knows anything about SU politics called the race the second the candidates were announced. As we settle for in a year of mediocrity, we'd like to ask ourselves how to break this trend and reward strong ideas or relevant expertise, not lazy campaigning and dodgeball, with the presidency.

Ryan Broms grove
OPINION EDITOR

Field hockey program attracts students from around the country

For "An interview with Athletics Director Ian Reade" by Rebecca Medel, March 7, 2023

So what if the Pandas field hockey athletes are not from Edmonton. Players from other parts of the country are attracted to the U of A because of its strong field hockey program. The players that come to Edmonton are involved in coaching and developing the junior leagues in this community and are a huge asset to field hockey in Edmonton. As a Pandas player who has been a volunteer coach for both the indoor and outdoor field hockey leagues in Edmonton for the last four years, I feel, I'm disappointed and dismissed by Ian Reade's response that no one plays field hockey here and that no one cares.

Toni Atinhidj
1:00 AM

Cutting field hockey team the easy thing to do

For "An interview with Athletics Director Ian Reade" by Rebecca Medel, March 7, 2023

Ian Reade thinks it's the right thing to do. No, it's just the easy thing to do. Take a sport with few players (in comparison to football and ice hockey for instance) and cancel it. As no one is interested (he presumed), there won't be much backlash. He can then balance his budget and no other team will have to make sacrifices.

He tells the players their sport (for which they have trained half their lives) is deemed not supportable even though these athletes were promised support in their sport and their education and chose this school based on these promises. They had other choices. I hope U of A gets another choice of an Athletic Director!

"GoPandas"
VIA WEIBER

Smoking policy a good move for the SU

For "New policy may restrict smoking on campus," by April Hudson, March 7, 2023

I have to say about this issue, I have a hankering in wall in a student center of a building such as the saucer-like office to get a cloud of cigarette smoke in the face. And having to breath it in. These are signs posted on buildings and doors, saying no smoking within so many meters from any entrance. But yet you see people close to doors ways smoking and exposing people to second hand smoke. We know of the health risks associated with smoking first hand and second hand smoking, but it seems that there are a good number of smokers that seem not to care about other people and their health and he health concerns.

The other day while walking out of Tory there was a smoker smoking right beside the door not two feet away from it and not in the required distance away from the smoking area.

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