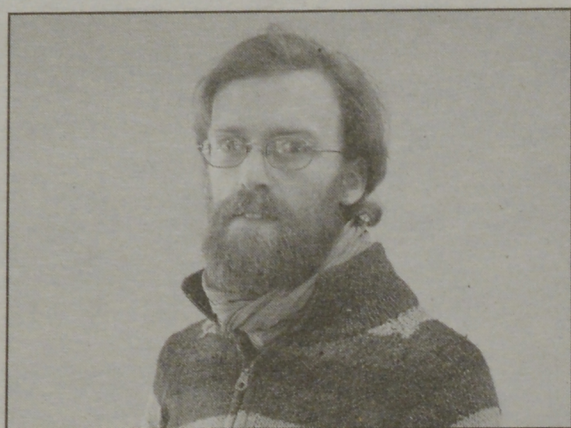


UNBSU VOTES 2009

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MATTHEW
ABBOTT
(PRESIDENT)

You've mentioned numerous times that you'll have meaningful consultations with students. How will you accomplish this and still have time to perform your other duties?

I agree that apathy is certainly a challenge. In terms of where we find these students that's why I'm suggesting we go to groups of students who are facing particular challenges and particular needs. I feel if we make it clear to them that we are actually willing and able to support them, and sort of make clear some of the ways that we might be able to support them, they'll be willing to come forward. We have to make sure that things are in place to ensure they can come forward to the consultation.

Obviously if we want to consult with student parents we need to have child care, so to put things in place like that to ensure they can come. And how are we going to find the time to do this? Right from the get go if elected President this will be one of my key priorities so I would from the get go start trying to connect with these different groups, use some of the different mechanisms already in place, for example the international student office. There are groups like ALPS who are connected to student parents and other groups in need there's places you can get a hold of them as well as different international student associations, things like this. Connect with people that way and then bring them to the table. Once we've heard from them we'll develop the policy and stay in contact with people through email and other means.

As part of the UfC team you mention that you'll make the Union more accountable and democratic. How are you going to do this?

Great, thank you. Indeed this is a challenge and I agree that the current executive do clearly state their office hours, their emails are readily available and council meetings are open but I feel that an executive and a council has to do more than that, we have to make sure the mechanisms are in place not only so that people can come, but we encourage people to come to us. So of course, both those things, open council meetings, stated office hours, contact information readily available are things we will continue doing, but we also need to create some mechanisms to reach out for accountability.

In terms of the open council meetings, while not a lot of students often come to council if many of them wanted to only a limited number could. There's not a lot of space in that room, so we need to really critically examine where we have council and make sure we're having it somewhere, where and if students were engaged, they could all fit. So that's one key mechanism of democratization, making sure the infrastructure is in place, and that were using appropriate space so that people can come to us.

In terms of executive accountability we need some mechanisms that are reaching out to students. Current executives have been writing in the Bruns which I think is a great tool, something that we can consider again next year. Another mechanism I intend to implement is a call in radio show. I recognize that students might not use that all the time, but again there needs to be something in place so that students don't need to get down to the Student Union hallway, they have ways from wherever they are to hold their executive to account. Yes we need to be open and willing to receive people, we also need to be reaching out and making ourselves available. Another very simple mechanism would be a one or two hour period where the executive committed to doing our work in somewhere like the SUB cafeteria where students can just happen upon us or come by. So students can still come to us, but we're also putting ourselves out there, essentially bringing ourselves to students.

You've mentioned that you're looking to build a more services-based union. How is the Union going to afford these services and how are you going to let students know about the services?

Basically if we're out there and we're consulting with students and we're developing services that matter to students and impact students we're out there. If we're visible on campus, students will know about the Student's Union. I do recognize that it's very important to have other means so that students know what's going on and the usual means of posters can be used, and those do cost money but we can keep those costs minimal. Of course we'll continue working with the administration on a listserv for the SU to directly link with its constituents as well as rely on the Student e-News and also use things like Facebook and Twitter.

There are many valuable services in place, but as was mentioned some of the services offered simply aren't being used. That comes back to making sure that people know what's available and also making sure that the services we are offering really meet the needs of the targeted groups.

In terms of the budget yes there's the promotions budget that we can get some money from, there was also a lot of money lost this year on entertainment. While we will continue to provide good entertainment for students by focusing on local entertainment and working really closely with some local communities and thinking really critically about the cost of our entertainment. We can keep those costs down and some of the money can be used for Canada Post and some of the other services we're looking at.



JON
O'KANE
(PRESIDENT)

One of the themes of this campaign has been change. As part of the current exec how can students know that it won't just be business as usual if you're elected?

What we have seen this year is a growth in our Student Union Executive and our council. We've raised the level of dialogue and fostered a lot of conversations around campus that I think are leading to this election. We have people all over campus saying that we need to keep growing and keep tackling this issues that started this year. I believe that the reasons these conversations started this year is because our executive led by example and brought a lot of the tough issues, such as our financial aid policy to the table for the first time in years. So when you're talking about change, the change has already begun.

If it's a question of prospective and experience I feel that I have the prospective and experience to do the job. My background as an advocate has prepared me to tackle the important issues, and fighting for student issues. However, my experience on the executive has allowed me to see the inner workings of how the organization works as a company. As CEO of Student Union Inc. we need to make sure that the President can also manage the team. That's something I feel I have the skills for.

You mention in your platform that you want to create a policy and research position to help the needs of students. What exactly does that entail and how can the SU afford that?

One of the issues that came up this year is the way in which we operate with our student lobby groups such as the New Brunswick Student Alliance and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. We do not currently have the resources in our organization to do research to produce policy for students. When we take a stance on a political issue we need to make sure that we don't just do it at the surface level. We need to make sure that everything we do is well researched and in the best interests of students.

So what I'd like to see is the creation of a policy officer, I'd like ideally to see it as a recent graduate from UNB to work here with students, responding to the needs of council to make sure that we can have an employee dedicated to making sure we have independent thought. Because when we just start to touch things on the surface level at our council, or just blindly listen to our student lobby groups, that puts us in a tough position. As for how we can afford this? Our budget is dynamic and flexible, it's supposed to respond to the needs of students.

This year, unfortunately because of the high one-time cost of the Canada Post we lost a full-time employee who used to work there. I'd like to see perhaps a portion of that salary taken towards a fresh out-of-university student able to work with the Union, really producing fine policy so that we can work towards representing our students better.

You're the current VP External and the former VP External of the NBSA. You mention in your platform working on pan-Canadian strategies, if you're elected how can students be assured that you won't just focus on external issues, that you will focus on what's happening here at UNB to current students?

That's a great question. And what I've done this year is set up the beginning of how the External portfolio can be handled. In the past what has happened is the VP External has only worked with the lobby organizations as a liaison. I took the position of we're starting to take stances on our own and beginning the process of challenging those organizations. I want to empower the executive to make sure that they can make the controversial and the difficult decisions in order to challenge the groups we're working with.

So I don't want people on my executive team to sit idly by and agree with people. I'm willing to empower the executive so that they can make those hard decisions and make that work and work with council and really represent students by bringing the issues back to them. Listening to the issues from students and informing them of issues that they might not even know of federally such as national lobbying strategies and things such as a pan-Canadian accord on education. These are important goals that we can not neglect, however I feel with my experience as VP External I've seen how the executive can work and I see how we can work together well.

What I'd like to do is continue to grow on that so in my capacity as President I can manage the team. Work internally with issues such as establishing profound professional relationships with the new administration. Looking at revitalizing our relationship with the Senate and the Board of Governors which right now is fairly passive. There's other groups on campus such as employment services that we can work a lot better with so we can take an active role in bringing great companies to work here that do not have questionable backgrounds.

This perspective that I've gathered over the past year is something I'm very proud of and is something I feel will help me next year in the capacity of President. Taking a step up from the vice-president to President is a challenging one, to distance yourself from your portfolio, however it is also empowering to know that you have seen the way things work and that you can improve the system.