

Student Union Reports Largest Voter Turnout in Recent History

The UPEI Student Union recently held its fall by-election to elect members to positions not filled in last year's general election. The October 1 and 2 election was a trial run for the union's new online voting system, designed in response to students' concerns and aimed at increasing voter participation. Excitement was further boosted by the vacancy in the office of Executive Vice President, resulting in four strong candidates vying for the position.

"By creating the Online WebVote, our Student Union has dramatically increased the potential for students to participate in our electoral process," said Brandon MacKenzie, Student Union President. "We recognized the need for change surrounding our electoral system and the new process is a collaboration of all our collective efforts."

This year's turnout was 795 voters, surpassing the record set in the 2003 general election.

"Without a doubt the WebVote contributed significantly to the record turnout; however, much can be attributed to the quality of the candidates vying for the remaining positions. The level of public debate on the campus has increased significantly in recent times as issues affecting students were debated during the recent provincial election. Our by-election only further demonstrated this as many of the candidates actively engaged their peers in discussions on what was important to them," said MacKenzie.

"Student Councillors, other than executive positions, volunteer their time to Council. They do so to ensure that the concerns of their constituents are

addressed. I believe that they should be commended for their commitment towards the betterment of the University experience for their peers," said Shelley MacNeill, Vice President Activities, "and such an increase in voter turnout leads us to believe that students are certainly appreciating their efforts."

Elected to council during the by-election were: Executive Vice President Jeff Grandy, Senators Megan MacKinnon and Thomas Lloyd, Board of Governors Crystal MacLeod, Ombudsman Ryan McDermott, and Councillors Jennifer Campbell, Robert Best, Joel Walker, Jeremy Hogan, Dennis Cahill, Sheena Murnaghan, and Peter Grandy.

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