

Dean Biehn where are you when we need you?

By Michael Kushner

Guardsman Staff Writer

O.K. folks, vacations over! Every year the Associated Student Council election ritual comes and goes the last week of April and many students attending CCSF still remain oblivious of the significance of the event and are left in the dark about what student government 's real function is. In fact, usually only about 2% (700-800) of the student body show up to vote. And for some reason, very few students ever choose to become involved in campus politics or the unique learning experience to gain at being chosen a representative. Thus they never come to realize the valuable rewards of serving on Council.

Why does this trend continue? What are the powers, limitations, rights and responsibilities of the president and senators, anyway? Whom or what do they stand for and what really goes on at council meetings? Who on campus cares enough to find out?

The election scheduled for May 25 and 26, 2001 should be an inclusive celebration of education and a much publicized joyous occasion. A passing of the symbolic torch that students and instructors alike should happily anticipate and meticulously prepare for from the beginning of the semester. So why was the application pamphlet and rules to become a candidate circulated only one week before they are due (April 6)? And only made available to an inner circle?

It seems unfair to the Guardsman staff and the entire student body that the AS did not start the election process sooner. Questions of ethics and competency come into play because there are mistakes and problems in the election procedure and application that cause exclusiveness and/or alienation of many students. Impropiety becomes suspect. Some errors may be attributed to computer typo's or caused by poor editing. Explained away as a printing error, a procedural flaw or human oversight of the campus by-laws and guidelines. Is more than an abridged version of the rules access-

able? Where can we read more than a brief summary when it is needed to clarify a description or definition in the petition? Who will be the watchdogs and defenders of democracy if not the campus newspaper?

But there are so many errors overlooked or unnoticed this year, compounded by the fact that there is still no replacement for Dean of Student Activities, there is cause to worry that the whole affair will surely have a lasting effect on the quality of student leadership in the coming years. This critical analysis is meant to be constructive dialogue.

Can someone on AS please answer these simple questions?... What happened to the important requirement that officers had to be ICC club representatives for two semesters before elected to AS? How many senators are there? What position, title and authority does each one have? Do council members get paid anything? Where can you post election flyers? Must you take them down during the spring break, so as not to break the "no campaigning during spring-break" rules? Can you electioneer on the 23rd and 24th? Who if anyone is not on the list of prohibited endorsers? Is present council banned from open support?

Why is there no phone number or e-mail addresses printed in the election pamphlet to make it easier to contact the election commissioners or Dean of Student Affairs? Where is the job descriptions? What has the outgoing council accomplished in the past year? Who will have time to properly orient and train the incoming members? What was the 2000 - 2001 activity budget spent on, how much money is it going to be next year and who makes the decisions what to spend it on? If elected, do you get to do more than just attend meetings?

Has the Student Leadership 12 class produced any good leaders this semester? What could the \$6000 allocated to this election possibly going to be used for? How much do commissioners earn and what do they do to earn it. Who can I bring my grievances to? Will these widespread concerns change any-

thing or have any effect on the final outcome, tally or results of the election? Why do the students in Monday, Tuesday and Friday classes feel left out of the system in place? Why hasn't news of the open positions been posted all over campus in time for greater participation? Is the rumor that Frank Chong is much too busy with other educational duties just scuttlebutt (or true)? Does his personal commitments take so much time that he is unable to do a better job at overseeing the fairness of the upcoming election? Could better adult guidance or peer mentors or the wisdom of sage advice steer the younger, less experienced newer AS officers away from the petty squabbling and internal rives that seem to have divided/polarized today's council? Do the AS officers have some private agenda other than the welfare of students?

Although the Student Union houses the offices for AS council members, ICC meetings and hosts many campus-wide events it becomes very elitist that announcements of student activities and shared governance committees

(what's that?) are usually confined to that building only. Many projects, services and educational forums sponsored by the college and AS (including the election) are going unnoticed and have low attendance because of the lack of good outreach to all departments and instructors. The unequal distribution and almost secretive manipulation of

selective information begins at the main headquarters of council and is biased-based by not advertising soon enough to all the buildings on campus. Because most students don't know enough to walk through and look at SU bulletin boards periodically many opportunities to participate in worthwhile or fun events are completely missed by the majority of students.

Being busy studying for finals or weird hours of employment are only the surface answers to low voter turnout. Something must be done to prevent these unfair habits and practices from turning into a major crisis in the years to come. This might only be a public two-year institution but the upcoming election should maintain formal policy and follow the high standards set by the State Board. The obvious problems that we can easily point to workable solutions for should be important to every student and administrator connected to the Community College system in California. It seems every year the timing of the College's AS Council Elections causes inherent problems.

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