Referendum neglected

Yesterday's open forum, as is too often the case, turned into an opportunity for members of the presiden-
tial candidates’ campaign teams to voice attacks on other candidates. Despite this, the open forum is an important opportunity for stu-
dents to learn more about candidates’ platforms and have legitimate questions answered. And that certainly happened.

While it’s obvious that the forum should not be cancelled, a means of stopping smear attempts is tougher to come up with. Questions can’t be screened ahead of time — that would amount to censorship. Similarly, not allowing people on campaign teams to ask questions would prevent fair questions from being asked.

The solution lies in the mod-
erator and to create more formal policy surrounding the position. To begin with, the moderator needs to be someone that com-
mands the respect of students, so that students are unwilling to be seen making slanderous comments.

The nature of this person’s posi-
tion must guarantee impartiality. To that end, we suggest that WLUSU Presi-
dent Dr. Blouw would best fit the position.

Also, WLUSU should formally outline what is and is not permitted during the open forum, investing a moderator with the understanding and means to cut off questions or comments that are unacceptable.

At present, the open forum’s value is being compromised. It’s time to make sure it’s an infor-
national event, free of rants and accusations.

Open forum needs better structure

These unsigned editorials were agreed upon by at least two thirds of The Cord’s editorial board and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Cord’s volunteers, staff or WLUSU.

This time next week, the face of student politics at Laurier will have changed, as all of the major undergraduate student-run or-
ganizations on campus will have found new leadership.

In particular, with the election of a new Board and a new Presi-
dent, the reins that control the Wilfrid Laurier University Stu-
dents’ Union (WLUSU) will have been passed on once again.

Not too many students have thought of a WLUSU election cam-
paign is like having to go to the dentist or, better yet, like having your teeth cleaned with a hammer and a soldering iron; these elec-
tions are important, necessary and worthy of attention.

Sure, they’re not sexy, but, for the most part, democracy isn’t and it really shouldn’t be.

The democratic process is seri-
ous stuff; people all over the world live and die for the right to a box and choose who will repre-
sent their needs and interests.

And while it may be really easy as students to overlook the im-
portance of student government and focus our attentions on other things, like classes, assignments, the Superbowl or Last, these elec-
tions do matter.

Just think, if not for the compe-
tent leadership that the student representa-
tives have shown this year, the ancillary fee issue could have been something that pro-
pled this university into ugly and destructive litigation.

Thankfully, some people in the union knew what they were do-
ing and were able to tactfully nego-
tiate a deal with the school’s administration.

But I know what you’re saying, I know that you’re cynical and you feel that no matter what happens in the upcoming elections, the school will WLUSU will stay righted and all will be OK. But is OK good enough?

As a person, would you settle for listening to music that was only OK? Would you shell out your hard-earned dollars to go see a film if you thought that it was only going to be OK?

Would you stay with your boy-
friend or girlfriend if you thought that he/she was OK, and not the best person for you? I know I wouldn’t. And that’s the way that you should think going into this election.

For the next year, for better or for worse, and women who are victorious on February 7 will be the people with whom you have to spend the next 12 months of your life.

For all intents and purposes, and you and the members of WLUSU that will be running things in 2008–2009 will (hopefully) be locked in a committed relationship.

And unlike most relationships, where all you have to say is “good-
bye” to end things, the relation-
ship you’ll have with your student representa-
tives will be much, much harder to get out of.

So take voting seriously and don’t abstain. It really doesn’t take that much to put the necessary ef-
fort into voting. Take the time to read the platforms that were print-
ed in The Cord last week, or go on-
line and see the full platforms of your presidential hopefuls.

Read the question and answer section of this week’s paper and read for yourself what the candi-
dates have to say. If you missed this year’s Open Forum, read up on that too. Or better yet, ask around and create a meaningful dialogue about this election.

But most importantly: choose the people that you feel best rep-
resent your interests as a student; choose the people who will take care of the things that you want to have addressed.

Read the platforms critically; remember that these documents were written in order to influence how you will vote this week. Take this seriously, your role in the electoral process is just as impor-
tant as those chosen to govern.

Treat these elections as if you’re courting someone, and trying to see if they match up with your set of beliefs. Because, come Feb-
uary 8, I’m pretty sure that you won’t want to wake up in bed with student representatives that you don’t think care about you, people who you don’t think have your best interests at heart.

Democracy isn’t a one-night stand that you meet at the Tur-
ret and never have to put up with again. Democracy and student politics at least a one-year rela-
tionship, which has the potential for you to get screwed over and time again, and not in the ways that you’d like.