Edmonton Ward 12 By-Election

Deborah Stewart, NASA Communications Officer

City residents living in Ward 12 will go to the polls on February 22, 2016. The Ward 12 seat has been vacant since former councillor Amarjeet Sohi resigned after he was elected as an MP in last fall’s federal election.

There are a record number of candidates vying for the seat. At the nomination deadline, 32 people had filed nomination papers. The previous record for number of candidates in a by-election was in 1994 when there were 19 candidates running. This Ward 12 by-election is the largest in terms of number of candidates running in both Edmonton and Alberta’s election history.

The wide range of candidates include a school trustee, a veteran EPS police officer, a home builder, a construction project manager, a limousine driver, a student, a former president of a labour council, a transit instructor and several small business owners.

Major campaign issues cited by the candidates include diversity on City Council, transit concerns, inclusiveness and community safety.

The total population of Ward 12 is 91,310 residents. The number of eligible electors is 61,452. Historically, voter turnout is low for municipal elections. With the large number of candidates running, every vote will count in this by-election. Contrary to the belief of some, municipal elections are very important. They give individuals the opportunity to shape the direction of their own community by electing a strong, local leader.

Special ballots are available for eligible voters who are unable to vote at one of the advance voting opportunities or on Election Day. Contact 780-442-8683 or email elections@edmonton.ca for more information.

For more information about this by-election including candidate information, candidate forums and how and where to vote, see http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/by-election.aspx

If you live in this area and are concerned about transit issues, clean streets, well-maintained roads, recreational facilities, safe spaces, parks and recreation and waste management, make sure your voice is heard on February 22. It is time to turn opinion into action by voting.
NASA Finance Committee

Lindsay Baranowski, NASA Treasurer

Your union provides you with many valuable and important benefits, from organizing member social events, to serving as a resource for questions about your rights and entitlements as an employee. In addition to these day-to-day activities, NASA also acts as the collective bargaining agent with the employer, and advocates on your behalf with government. It does all of these things through various groups and committees, which include our steward program, our team of labour relations officers (LROs), our bargaining team, our Membership Services Committee, and our Political Action and Member Education Committee, to name just a few.

In order to ensure that NASA can fund all of these activities and services, members of the Finance Committee oversee the union’s financial activities and records. The committee, which meets once per month, is made up of volunteer NASA members from across the University community. This is a fairly new committee, formed in 2014 under our former Treasurer and current President, and our volunteer members tend to be individuals with financial and accounting backgrounds. The committee regularly reviews the organization’s financial statements to identify areas of concern and find opportunities for savings. It also assesses and recommends investment decisions to the Treasurer and Executive Board, assists in the creation of the annual budget, and works on special projects as they arise.

One of the first projects of the Finance Committee was to oversee the development of a much-needed Honoraria Policy, which has since been adopted by the membership. As you will likely be aware, the committee is currently working on an Investment Policy to guide the union’s investment strategy.

Following the Supreme Court of Canada’s January 2015 decision that the right to strike is constitutionally protected, NASA anticipates that the Government of Alberta will soon recognize this right for employees currently covered under the Public Service Employee Relations Act, or PSERA, which includes NASA members. Consequently, the union more broadly and the Finance Committee in particular have to consider what this will mean for our union. The Finance Committee anticipates the need to build a contingency fund to support members in the event of any future job action, and will consider how to best do this in the drafting of our Investment Policy, and in the months ahead.

If you want to contribute to the work of your union, and feel you could make a difference in this area, consider becoming involved with the Finance Committee. Sitting on this committee provides volunteers with a chance to be of service to their fellow members, while taking advantage of an opportunity for professional development. Our volunteers can feel confident that they are contributing to the success of our union, now and into the future.

NASA Member—Elizabeth Adolf

Deborah Stewart, NASA Communications Officer

Elizabeth Adolf – or Liz as she prefers to be called – has been NASA’s Secretary since May 2014. She has been involved with NASA for several years, having served on the Bylaws Committee and is currently a NASA steward.

In her campus job, Liz works as an Executive Secretary in Chemical and Materials Engineering. She has been on campus for five years. She finds her work rewarding and enjoys her interactions with both the administrative team and the graduate students. Prior to coming to the University of Alberta, Liz worked for Alberta Health Services in the Clinical Engagement Department.

She got involved with NASA because she felt it was time to support the people she worked with and she wanted to further the work of the union.

When Liz isn’t working in either her job or in her elected capacity with NASA, she is a rodeo volunteer.

(Continued on page 3)
extraordinaire with several organizations. She is passionate about her volunteer activities and is excited to educate people about the sport of rodeo. She volunteers with Edmonton Northlands, K-Days, the Canadian Finals Rodeo, and the Calgary Stampede. She also volunteers with many different rodeos throughout the province during the summer months.

Liz has lived in a number of places in Alberta and Saskatchewan but has called Edmonton home since coming back here in 2009.

Liz is a strong advocate for education, especially post-secondary education. She feels that all students deserve the opportunity to attend post-secondary institutions if they so choose, and should not be in debt for the rest of their lives paying off numerous student loans.

In her spare time, when not working rodeos, Liz can be found socializing with friends or taking road trips. She is an avid reader and enjoys music and watching curling.

She gives 100% of herself to any project or activity she undertakes and believes in living life to the fullest.

Mental Health and Wellness

Deborah Stewart, NASA Communications Officer

On January 27, 2016, the entire country was talking about mental health. While initiatives such Bell’s Let’s Talk campaign and the University of Alberta’s Mental Health Check-in are a good first steps, talking about mental health and wellness must not be relegated to the back burner for the other 364 days.

Every person has a level of mental health and wellness. That level may fluctuate and can change hourly or daily or at any given point in time. We need to be aware of mental health issues and learn the ways to help ourselves and others.

The infographic on the right is from the University of Alberta’s Mental Health Check-in Campaign. https://uofa.ualberta.ca/current-students/wellness/mhcheck-in

U OF A MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN
Checking in with ourselves by asking “How am I doing?”, as well as asking, “How are you doing?” to those around us helps to create an environment of wellness on our U of A campuses.

Checking in with yourself:
To be healthy, we need to check in on our physical, mental, and social well-being regularly. Mental health is an important part of our well-being, and we often have trouble recognizing what to do to achieve mental wellness.

Practice checking in with yourself using the following steps:
1. Consider your mental health needs (e.g., positive social connection, self-confidence, self-esteem, safety, security, encouragement, etc.)
2. Create a mental wellness daily routine (e.g., healthy social interaction, self-affirmation and encouragement, nutrition, sleep, enjoyable activities, etc.)
3. Recognize concerning mental health. Take notice in:
   - How you feel (e.g., excessive or extreme sadness, worry, anxiety, etc., lasting more than two weeks.)
   - How you think (e.g., confusion, memory and concentration problems.)
   - How you are acting (e.g., agitation or restlessness, physical complaints with no cause, changes in eating and sleeping.)
4. Address mental health challenges:
   - Get connected; reach out to people you trust, friends, family, teachers, co-workers, campus staff or services. Trust your instincts and talk to a doctor, nurse, social worker, psychologist, etc.

Checking in with others:
We don’t need to be a mental health expert to support others. Being a part of, and helping to create, a strong network of support for someone is important in case the person needs help from many people.

1. Approach a person you think may need support:
   - Share your concern about changes you’ve observed in them (e.g., “I noticed that you’ve seemed a little down lately,” and “I’m wondering how you’re doing?”)
   - Ask how they are doing in a way that is comparative to the changes.
2. Invite the person to talk about how they are feeling:
   - Ask open-ended questions and practice non-judgmental listening (e.g., “That sounds really hard,” or “I imagine that it must be difficult right now.”)
   - Share struggles that you’ve had to demonstrate that they are not alone.
3. Refer a person who needs more formal support:
   - Explore with them what kinds of professional services would be most useful (e.g., “I really don’t know what I’d do, what do you think about getting some experienced advice?”)
   - Share this card with its list of resources with them, or if appropriate for you, support them by asking if they’d like you to help them connect with one of these resources.

If you believe an individual is at immediate risk of harm to themselves, or that they need immediate formal intervention:
- Ensure that person is not left alone
- Offer to accompany them to an emergency or crisis service
- Call 911 if they refuse help
- Take threats of suicide seriously

If you have concerns or questions, consult with a professional or your helping experience.
- For a student, contact Counselling & Clinical Services or the University Support Services Team.
- For a staff member, contact the Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP).

For more information and resources, visit https://uofa.ualberta.ca/mhcheck-in

HELPFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Services for Students
Counselling & Clinical Services 780-492-2028 / 2-492 510B
Community Social Work Team 780-492-7242 / 2-200 510B
Graduate Student Assistance Program (GSAP) 780-492-7257
Interfaith Chaplains Association 780-492-4327
Peer Support Centre 780-492-2018 / 2-707 510B

Services for Faculty & Staff
Employee & Family Assistance Program 780-492-7257
Postdoctoral Fellowship Assistance Program (PFAP) 780-492-7257

General
Edmonton Support Network (24-hour support) 780-492-7257
Helping Individuals at Risk 780-492-7257 / 300 Carstairs Tower
Sexual Assault Centre 780-492-7257 / 2-707 510B
University Health Centre 780-492-6373 / 2-200 510B
NASA Spring General Meeting

Date: Wednesday, April 6, 2016
Location: Dinwoodie Lounge, SUB
Time: Noon - 1:00 pm

Public Interest Alberta’s 10th Annual Conference: “Advocacy in a Time of Opportunity”

April 14-15, 2016
Chateau Louis Conference Centre, 11727 Kingsway Avenue, Edmonton

Since Public Interest Alberta was founded in 2004, we have advocated for the protection of public services, and the public interest more broadly, in a time of crisis. With changes to more progressive governments at both the provincial and federal levels, we are in a time of opportunity for public interest advocacy.

For more information, see https://pialberta.org/2016conference