Election 2015

Canada’s 42nd general election is less than a month away. If the current poll projections are accurate, it looks as if the race will be extremely close.

It should come as no surprise that voting matters. It is one of the most basic expressions of our political opinions. *Every vote counts in every election.* Since this election is gearing up to be a tight race, good voter turnout is needed now more than ever.

According to Elections Canada, voter turnout for the 2011 federal election was 61.2%. The group with the lowest turnout at the polls are young Canadians between the ages of 18 – 24. There are a number of organizations that are working to engage with youth to encourage them to get out and vote.

Even though Canada goes to the polls on October 19, 2015, it’s not too late to learn about the upcoming election and the issues. A bit of research can go a long way in making an informed decision when casting your ballot. A good place to start is with the party platforms.

- Conservative Party of Canada - [http://www.conservative.ca/](http://www.conservative.ca/)

Another source of information is the Elections Canada website ([www.elections.ca/home.aspx](http://www.elections.ca/home.aspx)). On that website, you are able to check or update your voter registration and find out when and where to vote. There is also information for first-time voters and what ID is required in order to vote. Some deadlines to keep in mind:

- **Election day – October 19, 2015**
- **Advance Polls – October 9 – 12, 2015**

It’s been said that this 2015 federal election will be the most important and dramatic election in a generation. Take the time to find out about the issues, read the various party platforms, talk to your local candidates. And make sure you get out and vote!
Hello NASA Members – This is a brief introduction to what the Political Action and Membership Education Committee (PAC for short) is and how it works for you. I am often asked what the committee is, and what kind of work it does on behalf of the membership. While writing this short column I thought a lot about the best way to communicate what we do to you, the members. I will start off by giving you a brief background and definition of the committee. The PAC committee is relatively young, coming into existence after a successful motion was passed at the April 2014 General Meeting. The basic idea behind the formation of the committee is to do the following: Inform the membership about matters that affect us and advocate on your behalf (See section 16.9 in the bylaws for more details).

At times it is easier to explain by example, so I would like to list a few our activities and accomplishments we have done so far and highlight some of the things we will do in the future. Hopefully by doing this it will be clear what the committee actually does.

So far the PAC committee has held a screening of the film *We are Wisconsin*, an award winning film about people who fought against attacks on public services in Wisconsin. We have initiated an annual grant called the NASA Labour Solidarity Student Grant which will award a nominal sum to student groups to raise awareness about issues that are of mutual interest to post-secondary students and NASA members. We have also funded various campaigns, including the Post-Secondary Education Task Force (2014) which was an attempt to raise awareness about the importance of adequately funding post-secondary education in the province. The committee has also

(Continued on page 3)
Political Action & Member Education Committee

(Continued from page 2)
been in contact with sitting MLA’s to ask them to acknowledge the importance of NASA members at the University of Alberta and the essential function they play. One recent initiative was a lunch-hour presentation on October 6th around the issue of proportional representation. An upcoming initiative is securing spots for NASA members to attend the fall Parkland Institute Conference (http://www.parklandconference.ca/).
Make sure to stay tuned to the Buzz for more details regarding these and other initiatives we want to bring forward to the membership.

I want to end this column with a thought about why the PAC committee exists and why the members should care about our work. Often, decisions are made by Administration or various levels of government that directly impact our lives and the lives of our families. It is imperative that we are as vocal as possible about the fact that we are vitally important to the University of Alberta, that our jobs matter, and that our place within this institution needs to be strong and secure.

NASA Member—Bridget Stirling

Deborah Stewart, NASA Communications Officer

NASA member Bridget Stirling is a writer, communicator, activist and advocate. She can now add politician to that list. Bridget is Edmonton’s newest Public School Board Trustee for Ward G.

Bridget currently works on campus as a Communications Associate in a shared role between the Office of Marketing and Communications and the Faculty of Native Studies. With her recent school board win, she is in the process of determining how she will split her time between the University and the Edmonton Public School Board.

Bridget has a wealth of education and experience under her belt. She has a Masters Degree in Intercultural and International Communications and has worked as a sessional instructor at MacEwan, as a consultant and as an educator at the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton.

A lesser-known fact about Bridget – she dropped out of university the first time around. She says like a lot of young people, she struggled with knowing what she wanted and was dealing with the pressure of transitioning to adult life. She went back at 25 years old with an understanding of what she wanted and how to get there. She learned an important life lesson – a person can grow and learn from failure and sometimes finding a different path than the one expected is all that is needed.

Bridget has been an active member of NASA’s Political Action and Member Education Committee. Her main reason for getting involved with this new committee was to help bring awareness to NASA members around how political issues, especially provincial labour and post-secondary issues, impact the lives of support staff at work.

Outside of work, Bridget is an enthusiastic volunteer, donating time to such diverse organizations as the Edmonton Social Planning Council, Edmonton Gold Bar NDP and the Edmonton Folk Music Festival. As a Trustee with Edmonton Public Schools, she will be resigning from a number of her volunteer positions.

In her downtime, Bridget enjoys walking and hiking in Edmonton’s river valley. She is an avid traveller and says the time she spent doing field work in India as part of her Masters program was a life changing experience.

Bridget’s favourite quote is from Margaret Atwood – “A word after a word after a word is power” – very appropriate given Bridget’s communications and advocacy background.

Bridget takes her oath of office as Trustee on October 6, 2015. Congratulations from NASA – we know you’ll do a fantastic job in your new role.
NASA Fall General Meeting

Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2015
Location: ECHA L1-190
Time: Noon

Election Day - Monday, October 19, 2015
Polls Open - 7:30 am - 7:30 pm

Save The Date—Parkland's 19th Annual Fall Conference

Parkland is hard at work finalizing the details for their 19th Annual Fall Conference, which will take place on the University of Alberta campus from November 20-22, 2015. As always, the conference will bring together leading researchers, activists, and thinkers from around Alberta and across Canada for three stimulating days. Check http://www.parklandconference.ca/ for more information about the conference.