

From the Publisher

YOU can be sure of one thing this election year: the candidates care about you and they really want your vote.

E. Del Smith, a former executive director of the College Republicans and now a prominent Washington representative, told us that presidential candidates always have cared about college voters. But there was never a credible forum to speak directly to college students. Until *U*.

This year, the candidates spent nearly an hour talking with *U* about the issues you are most concerned about. Our questions were based on the results of *U*'s survey of more than 1,000 college students nationwide.

Four top campus editors were selected to join *U*'s editors in the interviews. Andrew Levy, *U* of Michigan, and Kris Mayes, Arizona State *U*, were chosen to interview Gov. Clinton with *U* editors Mark Charnock, Kelley Tuthill and Molly Williams. Geoffrey Henley, *U* of Texas, and David Frese, Kansas State *U*, were slated to interview President Bush with *U* editors Charnock, Kristi McDowell and Jackie Spinner.

We had the questions and the interviewers. All we needed were the candidates.

In July, we contacted the campaigns' big Pooh-Bahs. For the next eight weeks, we were fortunate to work



Gov. Clinton chats with *U* in North Carolina



President Bush talks to *U* from the White House.

closely with the front-line people who put in 14-hour days, seven days a week for their respective candidates.

Our thanks to Kris Seeger, assistant director of communications at the Bush campaign, and Ethan Zindler, assistant press secretary at the Clinton campaign.

We learned a lot in the course of our quest for the interviews — most notably that “campaign organization” is an oxymoron. To wit:

Early one morning, a Clinton campaign adviser called from Washington to say he'd just been assured that everybody was doing their best to schedule the *U* interview. That was the day *after* we interviewed Gov. Clinton.

The White House faxed us copies of the president's weekly schedule. According to one, Labor Day week started on Monday, Sept. 7, Wednesday was Aug. 26, and the week ended on Friday, Aug. 7.

We also learned that the words “definite” and

“deadline” aren't in the political vocabulary. “Tentatively” is the closest they get. Our deadline was Aug. 28.

We were tentatively scheduled to interview President Bush Aug. 26. The campaign was cooperative; the weather wasn't. After Hurricane Andrew devastated South Florida, the president canceled his schedule indefinitely. Our interview was a casualty.

On Aug. 29, Ethan Zindler called. The Clinton interview was on *if* we could meet him Sept. 1 in Greensboro, N.C. We did — in a senior citizen's center between campaign stops.

We had almost given up on Bush when Kris Seeger called Sept. 7 and said she'd have an answer early (5:30 a.m. in Los Angeles) the next day. The editors made reservations on a 7 a.m. flight to Washington. The scheduling meeting ran late, but we finally got the OK — an hour after the flight left. *U* interviewed President Bush that afternoon by phone. *Mea culpa*. I decided not to send the editors to Washington without a definite “Yes.”

Both of the candidates gave *U* — and YOU — more time than we requested. We learned a lot about them from these exclusive interviews. We think you will, too.

Stephan Morris Sweetland

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