

What's going on with the IFC?

The Incidental Fee Committee, allocating millions of dollars in student fees to various University organizations, is a few members short.

For the IFC, it was back to the books this year. However a few members have chosen not to participate. Three members of the IFC have turned in their resignations.

The question arises — why quit? Two members sighted increased tuition as reasons for resignation. It seems if anyone would have a premonition of a tuition hike, it would be someone on IFC. Unless you have spent a great deal of time in another country or under a rock, it has been no surprise that tuition is increasing. Elections are held at the end of the year. Anyone, especially someone running for an IFC position, must have known tuition was increasing in the upcoming year.

It is scary to think that the people who manage millions of student dollars can't quite manage their own money. At least not enough to foresee and incorporate tuition hikes into their budgets.

One of the members who turned in a resignation granted her continued service throughout fall term. This is reassuring, considering one of the figures negotiating our incidental fees has very little interest in what the future holds. Furthermore, holding off her last day until the end of the term allows for a nice paycheck over the Christmas holiday, even though she will not be occupying her seat when classes resume winter term.

This person is currently taking 21 credits in order to graduate at the end of the term. When elected at the end of the previous school year the members obviously knew the IFC term lasts through the school year. With only 21 credits remaining until graduation, a minimal full-time load of 12 credits would not substantiate a year with the IFC regardless.

Upon resigning the IFC positions, members noted the need for a cohesive unit. We are talking about the management of millions of dollars here. The need for cohesion is obviously evident. Now it will be up to ASUO President Eric Bowen to appoint members to the IFC.

The IFC plays a unique and important role at the University. Being a member is a commitment that is understood and explained before elections. IFC members are vital in the dispersal of funds to the University. We all suffer when they don't have enough forethought to represent the chosen office adequately. Hopefully Bowen has an adequate pool of people to choose from as he replaces the resigned members.

These positions are not for everyone. Those that run should have the forethought and the commitment to finish what they have started. There is a great deal of money involved in this issue, and many campus organizations rely on the IFC for their funds. The role of the IFC is demanding enough; dealing with resignations is another headache that just isn't needed.



OPINION

Yeltsin: Good, Bad or Ugly?



MARIUS MELAND

It was just like a cowboy movie.

There were the Good Guys, and there were the Bad Guys. After a gradual build-up of suspense, there was a bloody showdown between the Good Guys and the Bad Guys. And in the final scene, the Bad Guys were driven out of their hide-out and captured.

Everyone applauded, and the audience left the theater quietly contented that, once again, justice had been served.

The Bad Guy, Alexander Rutskoi, had a suspicious moustache, a malevolent sneer and a foreign accent. And Boris Yeltsin, with his bushy eyebrows and tall and hefty build, looked like the Russian version of John Wayne.

There were no saloons, no bar girls and no horse chases through the desert. But what do you expect — this is modern-day Russia, and to the best of my knowledge, there are no saloons, bars or deserts in Moscow.

Besides, everyone knew this was reality, and reality can't be exactly like a cowboy movie. Everyone, that is, except the newspaper editors and the television news directors.

If you've read the news from Moscow in the past few days, you might have been persuaded that the conflict between the Russian Parliament and President Yeltsin is as simple as the conflict between the Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Unfortunately, reality is more complex, perhaps too complex to be explained in a three-minute television segment or a 15-inch newspaper article.

If we are to believe most journalists, Boris Yeltsin is a champion of liberty, justice, human rights and democracy. The "hard-liners," on the other hand, are "die-hards for the cause of a return to a command economy,

centralization of power, gulags, oppression, militarism, imperialism, employer mandates, the whole discredited socialist works," according to William Safire in the *New York Times* last Sunday.

Some of these journalists appear to be suffering from a severe case of amnesia. They seem to have forgotten what they wrote a couple of years ago, in the midst of the power struggle between Russian President Boris Yeltsin and his Soviet counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev. At that time many Americans, including President Bush, were more than a little bit skeptical about the Russian President.

Boris Yeltsin is himself a product of the Communist Party. Yes, Boris Yeltsin may have rejected Communism, but let's not forget that it was the Communist Party that afforded him a career in politics. And through his breeding in the party he has formed some attitudes that are far from democratic.

One of the first things Yeltsin did after the failed coup d'etat and the kidnapping of Mikhail Gorbachev, was ban the Communist Party and shut down the communist press. It's not in the democratic spirit to prevent opponents from organizing and expressing themselves freely.

Now, once again taking advantage of the momentum, Yeltsin is doing the same thing all over again. He has taken full control of the national television stations and has banned the opposition newspapers and magazines. It makes you wonder, if Yeltsin really wants "free and democratic" elections in December, why is he so afraid of letting the opposition express itself?

And don't forget, the Parliament was elected in what was judged to be a "free and fair" election in 1990. It's true the election took place in the communist era, but so did the election of Boris Yeltsin in May 1991, which followed similar nomination and election procedures.

Some of Yeltsin's power tactics are highly peculiar, even by Russian standards. Strangely enough, people who dare criticize Yeltsin seem to lose their privileges

shortly afterward. After Mikhail Gorbachev criticized Yeltsin's economic policy in 1992, Yeltsin confiscated his limousine. When Vice President Rutskoi persisted with his criticism against the President, Yeltsin took his limousine and fired half his staff. And Constitutional Court Chairman Valery Zorkin lost his dacha when he sided with Yeltsin's opposition.

Rutskoi and his allies are not democrats. They represent the old guard of communist who deplore Russia's development toward a democracy and want to rebuild the Soviet Union, with its totalitarian power structure and disregard of personal liberty and human rights. To put it in cowboy terminology, they belong among the Bad and the Ugly — they're far from Good Guys.

But the Western media is simplifying the political situation in Russia when they try to portray Boris Yeltsin as a Democratic knight. Russia has no tradition for democracy, and its leaders have not had a chance to develop the kind of democratic ideals and attitudes that permeate the West.

Russia's democratization is a learning process, and Yeltsin is far from fully educated. At times, he has demonstrated admirable courage and determination in his attempt to introduce democracy to Russia. At other times, he has acted with an imperial air, failing to practice the ideals that he claims to pursue.

But Yeltsin is our best bet for now. Stretching over 11 time zones, with a population of more than 140 million, Russia is an enormous country. A chaotic situation in which the authority of Russia's leader is in doubt would be detrimental to the country. Sometimes, restoring order and government authority is more important than practicing democracy.

For now, all we can do is wait and see. But don't wait for a happy ending in Russia. Yeltsin won't ride into the sunset on his white horse. After all, there are no cowboys in Russia.

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