

Montana State Senate Administration Committee

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Distinguished members of the State Senate Administration Committee:

I was asked to write a brief note detailing the background of the Montana Associated Students (MAS) nominating process for the Student Regent. I am currently serving in a journalistic capacity and therefore will keep my comments limited to the facts that pertain to MAS support for Student Regent Kala French.

I served as President of the Associated Students of The University of Montana last year along with current ASUM President Gale Price. We, like current Gov. Schweitzer and Lt. Gov. Bohlinger, ran on a split ticket so to speak. In fact, MontPIRG's Matt Singer was my Student Political Action Director.

Last year, MAS aggressively recruited candidates for Student Regent. Missoula alone sent three candidates- Gale Price, Jake Eaton- currently serving in Iraq with the 163rd Infantry Battallion, and Brad Cederburg. We had a distinguished, highly qualified pool of candidates. Kala French stood out among candidates from all of the schools to be unanimously selected as the top choice for student regent. As you know, even in one party it is find to hard consensus...so imagine the fact that all of the student body presidents from Montana community colleges and universities were able to agree.

MAS held interviews over the course of three months- this following significant interviews at each campus. Yes, Kala is young, and yes Kala is technically a Bobcat now- but that didn't stand in the way of her selection, in fact it highlighted her skills. UM's Brad Cederberg was also regarded as a top candidate, not only because of his young age, but also because of his skill.

I understand that the issue of multiple year appointments has been raised recently, though not last year after the appointment was made. There was no opposition when the appointment was made. In discussions, the members of MAS last year had a consensus that it would be good for MAS to have a student regent that could serve for more than one year, to give students a stronger voice on the Board of Regents. As you know, every other member serves 7 years, as all regent terms are stipulated under the Montana Constitution.

As all of you know, almost all university issues have little to do with Republican and Democrat and everything to do with administrative issues and fees. I will let this year's leaders on MAS speak for themselves- but I can say that for last year's members: If you take Governor Martz and Governor Schweitzer out of the equation altogether- and let the students pick the student regent- they selected Kala French. ****END****