

Federal election results are in

Canadians put newly elected Conservatives on a tight leash

Story and Photos
By Stephen Kronstein
Kwantlen Chronicle

Most Kwantlen University College students aren't exactly aligned with the ideology of the Conservative party. For some, this ideology is enough to make them fear for their rights.

"I cried," said Laura Ferguson, 25, a Kwantlen interior design student. "I shed a little tear this morning . . . in fear," she said of her reaction upon learning the results of the federal election.

Ferguson feared for "her rights being taken away by the Conservatives." She thinks a vote may come up in parliament under Harper's leadership that could remove the right of women to choose whether to have an abortion or not.

"It was explained to me that it was not that big a deal because it's a minority government; that things aren't just going to get passed like willy-nilly," she said. But even so, she's still worried.

Perhaps she's right.

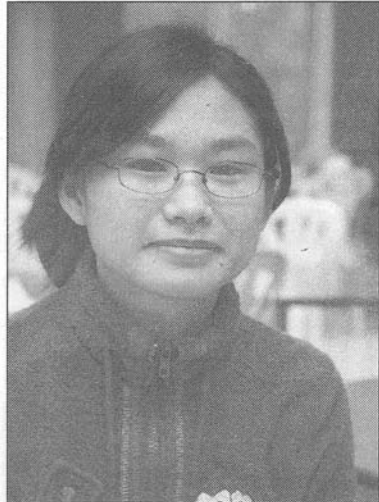
According to Kulvir Gill, the Kwantlen Student Association's Richmond campus director and a general arts student, statements

made by a Conservative representative suggested that a woman's right to choose was under fire.

"I'm not a big fan of the Conservatives," said Gill, 18. "I don't like their views on women, especially."

Gill voted in the Vancouver South riding for Dosanjh.

"I heard there were [majority Conservative] projections," said Gill, "but they lost it over the weekend when one of their representatives spoke out about women and abortion."



Ellen Banh questions the values of the Conservatives.

Gill also criticized how the Conservatives seem too closely aligned with the administration of the United States.

"I'm not a big fan of going to Iraq," he said. "I think that Canada is known as a peace-keeping country and I think that we're strong in that sense."

"The Conservatives will have their fun, but it's a minority government," he said. "I don't think anything [extreme] is going to happen."

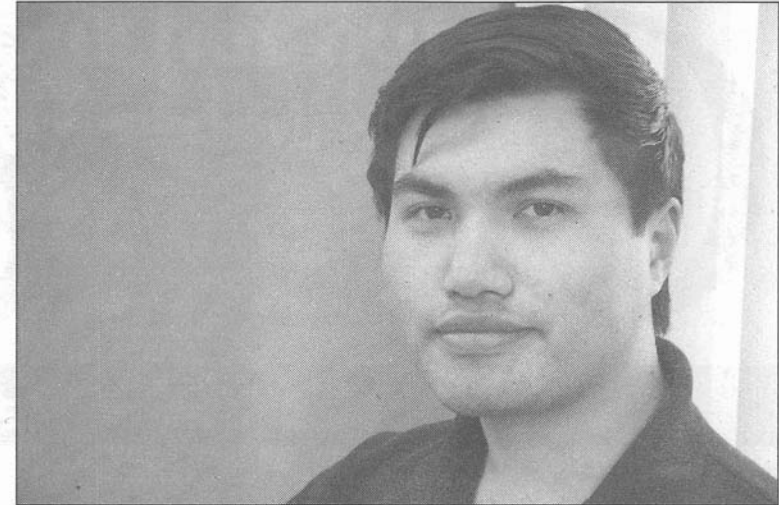
Other students at Kwantlen seem to share Gill's opinion.

"It's not like [the Conservatives] are really going to be able to do much because it's a minority government," said Leo Ing, a 28-year-old biology student at Kwantlen. "They don't really have that much power."

Like so many other students, Ing didn't vote in this election.

"I didn't know enough to vote," said Ing. "I probably would have just voted for the Liberals, anyhow. But at the same time, I didn't really feel passionate about it."

If Ing had voted in his riding, Vancouver South, he would have helped re-elect former Liberal health minister Ujjal Dosanjh, who won his seat with 20 per cent more votes than his closest challenger.



Leo Ing feels the minority-government situation may be a good thing for Canadians.

Despite his inclination towards the Liberals, Ing thinks having a minority Conservative government may mean Canadians will have a more well-balanced parliament.

Conservative leader Stephen Harper is "extremely lucky to be in the situation that he's in, because he has an extra-long period of time to prove himself, because nobody wants to have an election for a while," said Ing, alluding to the fact that this election came so soon after the previous one and seems to have led to voter fatigue.

"Maybe that's a good thing for democracy, maybe everyone will actually try to work together."

Though a Conservative government isn't what Ellen Banh was interested in, the threat of a Harper-led majority and a strong Conservative candidate in her riding wasn't enough to force her to change her vote from

Green to Liberal. The Liberal candidate was the only competitor with a realistic chance of unseating Delta-Richmond East's Conservative incumbent John Cummins.

"I think the policies are most important and also the history of the political party," said Banh, a 20-year-old Kwantlen psychology student who feels it's more important to vote for something rather than against something.

Banh favours the environment over social issues, she said. "Social and environmental issues are both important, but I voted for Green because I think that's the big-picture problem."

"I'm not sure about the Conservatives on some of their policies, like they're against same-sex marriage," said Banh, "but even so, maybe they will do something new or positive. I'm not totally pessimistic about it."