

# Former KSA head runs for councillor

## The former president of the KSA is running for a seat as councillor on the Langley township council

By Kristian Rasmussen

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Kwantlen University College may now add another star to its list of successes in the form of political candidate Mark Stephens. The former president of Kwantlen's student association who lives by the words, "If you lose or fail, get over it, rub a little dirt on it, and get back in the game," is running for councillor for the township of Langley in November's civic elections.

Stephens, the son of Liberal cabinet minister Lynn Stephens, began his stint in politics during his senior year of high school. Stephens was told by his vice principal at the time that he needed a higher GPA average to run for class president. Ste-

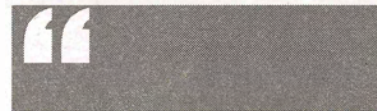
phens then decided to compromise and in doing so won himself a seat on the grad committee, so began his life in politics.

Stephens believes that his parents have been the greatest influence on his political career. "Both my parents were heavily involved in the community. If anything they instilled a sense of civic duty in me to give back to the community that has given me so much for over 30 years."

The 34-year-old believes the strongest message he received from his parent's upbringing is to "be thoughtful in policy-making and be a part of good government and good policy."

Stephens hasn't forgotten Kwantlen and contends that being student association president

was a great experience. "I was new to the post-secondary system and I had a lot of good people guide me



*"I had a lot of good people guide me"*

**- Mark Stephens**

like Skip Triplett, Sandi Klassen, Doug Fletcher, Tom Raddish and Board Member and Professor Kim Richter." Stephens laughs because he is now running against Richter for a council seat. Stephens plans to tackle some serious issues in his community if he is elected "Crystal

meth is a big issue and it is escalating at an alarming rate." The young politician hopes to see an information booth at Kwantlen in the future to warn students of the dangers of the addictive drug.

Stephens would also like to see more transit options available for students. "When I was president and board member I pushed for an inter-campus shuttle system that would transfer students in between campuses from seven in the morning 'till 11 at night." Students housing is also a big issue for Stephens. "Many, if not all students, rent, and I would like to see illegal suites become legal in the township." When asked what information he might pass on to students pursuing a career in politics, Stephens replies, "Lots of

people work in politics, some treat it as a job others a career and for some like me, a calling." He maintains that students interested in politics should "get involved in your local municipal, provincial and federal scene."

Stephens says there is a need of new fresh faces on the political scene. "All levels of government are struggling to fill the gaps of our baby boomers retiring." Stephens is optimistic about young talent in the political scene. "Young, energetic, men and women with the most important quality that being attitude can go along way in politics."

Stephens is honest about the challenges young politicians face, however, "Politics in B.C. is a blood sport you have to have thick skin and not take things too personally."