ASUA candidates set to debate

By Dana Crudo

Students who want to learn about the ASUA presidential candidates should make a trip to the union today to watch the first non-ASUA sponsored presidential debate.

The Arizona Daily Wildcat is directing the debate today from noon to 1 p.m. in the UofA Bookstore in the Student Union Memorial Center. Daniel Scarpinato, editor of the Desert Yorkshock and a panelist, said the debate will give students the chance to see why they should care about who is their student body president next year.

Scarpinato will moderate the debate with Jeff Stidler, two-time editor in chief of the Wildcat and an administrative reporter.

"Hopefully students who come will see through our questions why the elections are important," Scarpinato said.

He said for as long as he can remember, candidates have been running campaigns, saying they want to make students more aware of what student government does.

He said this is a good opportunity for students to see which road candidates want to take ASUA on.

Scarpinato said the debate would give students the chance to see the personalities of the candidates.

Saul Losb, editor in chief of the Wildcat, said the debate will provide an opportunity for students to meet the candidates and hear what they are all about before the debate.

See ASUA/H

Students writing own letters of reference

Some professors allow students to write their own recommendations

By Natasha Bhuyan

Writing a letter of recommendation for a student requires a professor to do a fair amount of homework, but some professors say they don’t have the time.

Instead, professors are letting the students do the work.

Elena Plante, an associate professor for speech and hearing sciences, said she allowed a student to write her own letter because the deadline was quickly approaching.

Even though the student wrote most of the letter, Plante said there were parts of the letter she had to enhance because she noticed that students underestimate their own abilities.

"I think doing this is fine because I will only sign a letter if I agree with it," Plante said.

Graduate schools across the country said as long as the professor’s signature is authentic, they also do not see a problem with the technique.

Mary O’Rourke, the director of admissions and student services for Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, said if the signature matches, the letter is valid.

"We take a variety of factors into context and consider every piece," she said. “A bigger problem we have is that some students don’t write their own essays.”

Joan Dim, managing director of the office of public affairs for New York University’s school of law, said she was not aware professors did this, but also does not see a problem.

But Joe Ford, the assistant director of admissions for Michigan State University’s school of business, said he highly discourages students writing their own letters, even if the professor does edit for content.

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Students learn hands-on at Legislature

By Sarah Stanton

The existence of an afterlife is a mystery that has plagued religion, philosophy and psychology since their conception — until now.

For seven years, Gary Schwartz, a UA professor and director of the Center for Frontier Medicine in Biofield Science, has been conducting afterlife experiments and research that he believes prove the survival of human consciousness after death.

“When you look at the totality of the data, the simplest and most parsimonious explanation that accounts for the largest amount of data is the survival of consciousness hypothesis,” he said.

The experiments are performed in a lab with a medium, a sitter and Schwartz. A medium is someone who believes that he or she can communicate with the dead, and a sitter is a person who wishes to gain knowledge about a deceased loved one.

The medium receives messages from the dead and then relays them to the sitter, who tells Schwartz if the information is correct or incorrect.

These messages can include the deceased’s cause of death, memories that include the deceased and the sitter and “signs” for the sitter that indicate the deceased is around him or her.

After the experiment, Schwartz analyzes the data and determines the accuracy of the medium’s reading.

In this process, he rules out information that the medium got about the deceased before the experiment or that enhances because she noticed that students underestimate their own abilities.

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