

On Missing the BC NDP Provincial Executive

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Monday, November 30, 2009

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So the election today was disappointing, getting only 140 votes for one of the 6 Vice-President positions. The "Unity Slate" swept everyone into power that they stood for election.

Great thanks go to all the people talking about the ideas I was running on, particularly the viral champions who were spreading word widely.

140 was almost half as many votes as I would have needed to beat the person who won the 6th spot. But at the same time 140 votes is a great deal higher than 37 or some number that reflects having made only a passing impact on the 600 or so delegates.

There are many things I could have done better on the campaign, from long-term network building beforehand, extensive volunteer recruitment for activism on the floor, to less reliance on a green online campaign since most delegates didn't embrace that convention goal of virtual paperlessness. To a certain extent, my candidacy was an exploration into what kind of reception these ideas would receive at the governing body of the party: 20-something percent support.

One of many positives in the run was in shining a spotlight on some Think Forward BC NDP ideas about internal democracy, accountability, transparency, following our policies, engaging members and above all, putting the environment, Sustainable BC and embarking on a plan to avert climate breakdown into the forefront of the party's priorities.

Many other candidates, delegates and speakers carried these messages beyond just me. And while the months that Think Forward BC NDP has been in existence cannot be the sole explanation for all these people talking about the issues, the dialogue process begun certainly has its place in helping facilitate these ideas.

Where to go from here? That is up to members of the party who want to see the party improve, walk its policy talk better, and more effectively engage members and the thousands of progressive people and groups in the province that make up the progressive social movement out for justice and a better world.

Currently the party is doing an adequate job of representing many people, but it could be doing such a better job of being the electoral wing of this social movement. Internal and external engagement are critical.

So we'll see where the new leadership will take the party. There is a batch of new senior staff to hire and a new tone to establish. There will be growing pains and sputtering starts, but people who sincerely wish for a vibrant, effective and solid rock of a political alternative will continue working to make sure the party keeps improving.