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Republicans Host Conference at Bates to Encourage Youth Political Action

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The Maine College Republicans, in conjunction with the Bates College Republicans, hosted the fourth consecutive Youth Leadership School at Bates on Feb. 17 and 18 in Muskie Archives. The school is designed to help train high school and college students with conservative ideals to be campus activists and the next generation of conservative leaders.

The Youth Leadership School is a two- day program hosted by the Leadership Institute of Arlington, VA. This year's event, which drew about two dozen students from all over Maine, taught students effective organizational and campaign techniques in order to lead effective grassroots activism. Specific topics this year included "The Real Nature of Politics," "Media and Public Relations," "Mock Elections" and political crisis management.

The Maine College Republicans also hope that the program will motivate students to become further involved in spreading the Republican message.

"The strategy and skills Maine College Republicans will learn [at the Youth Leadership School] will motivate them to promote the positive Republican message in every corner of the Pine Tree State in the coming weeks and months," said Nate Walton '08, State Chairman of the Maine College Republicans.

Jonathan Browher '08, the Bates College Republicans' First Vice-President and Editor-in-Chief of the state organization's newspaper, the Pachyderm Press, feels that it is important to allow conservative students to develop their political skills outside of their college campus, where they might feel intimidated.

"Conservative students on campus have, for years, been under-represented and their viewpoints under-valued or misunderstood," said Browher. "Programs such as the Youth Leadership School provide budding leaders with the tools necessary to build successful organizations and to run youth efforts for political candidates. In an environment such as the college campus, conservative students are often without the encouragements or the blessings of the administration. They may be afraid to talk about their political views, much less become active in causes supporting their beliefs. YLS gives these students not only the tools they need, but also the motivation and encouragement to stand up for what they believe on a campus dominated by liberal ideologies."

The Maine College Republicans recently returned from the 2007 Conservative Political Action Conference in Washington, D.C., which took place from Mar.1 through Mar. 3. They brought 72 students to the conference, one of the largest college delegations at the conference. Prominent speakers at the conference included Vice President Dick Cheney, Fox News host Sean Hannity, author Ann Coulter, Senator Mitch McConnell and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

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