**Voting Method Reforms for Governing Council Elections - Presented to the
Elections Committee June 22, 2010 by Ryan Campbell**

Current System - Block Voting

-Every voter receives 1 vote for each position available in their constituency.
-Whichever candidate(s) receive the most votes is declared elected.

Effects

-Produces often homogeneous results.
  • If Team A receives 51% of the vote and Team B receives 49% of the vote,) Team
    A receives both seats.
-Often results in Governors elected with the support of a small minority of voters.
  • If Team A receives 34% of the vote, Team B receives 33% of the vote and Team
    C receives 32% of the vote
  • With 20 Candidates, both Governors may be elected with as little support as 5%
    of voters.
  • Overwhelming majority of votes are "wasted"
-Highly vulnerable to tactical voting
  • Similar candidates may "split the vote" with each other, meaning the presence of
    candidate C may determine whether or not A is elected over B.
  • Creates a zero sum game where it is in a candidate's best interests to attack
    other candidates, especially those with similar platforms and backgrounds\
  • Creates highly variable results from year to year
  • To quote Wikipedia, "Additionally, like first past the post methods, small cohesive groups of
    voters can overpower larger numbers of disorganised voters who do not engage in tactical
    voting, sometimes resulting in a small minority of voters electing an entire slate of candidates
    by merely constituting a plurality."
-Current rules attempt to mitigate system's failings but allowing a maximum of one
candidate to be elected from any given college or faculty
  • These rules fail to consider other factors beyond college, such as background,
    experience and most importantly platform

Proposed System - Single Transferable Vote / Preferential Proportional

-Each voter ranks the candidates in order of preference, regardless of the number of
seats available in their constituency.
-First preferences are then tallied. In single member constituencies, if any candidate
receives more than 50% of all vote cast, they are elected. In two member
constituencies, the threshold is 33%.
-If no candidates receive the required threshold, the candidate with the least vote is
dropped and his or her voters' next highest voting preferences are then redistributed.
This process is repeated until all remaining seats are filled.
-If a candidate receives more than the required votes, then these excess votes are
redistributed in proportion to his or her supporters' next highest preferences.
  • If candidate A receives 67% of the vote when only 33% was required, then each
    of his supporters has a half of their vote distributed to their next highest
    preference.
-Used in national elections in Ireland, Australia, North Ireland and Malta, as well as local
elections in New Zealand and Scotland. Also used for most student elections in the UK,
as well as UC Berkeley's student union ASUC.
  • ASUC elections regularly receive more than 40% voter turnout for undergrads,
    and up to 35% voter turnout for the overall student body.

Effects

-Produces proportional results and a diverse set of winners.
-Minimizes "wasted" votes
- For a 2 member constituency, at least 2/3 of voters see someone they voted for elected.

-Encourages candidates to reach out to their opponents' supporters to garner second and third preference votes.
-Ensures the elected candidates have broad based support in the student body, and gives a strong mandate to new Governors.
-Prevents large voting blocks from controlling the outcome of the election, and allows candidates from smaller faculties and the suburban campuses a greater chance to be elected.
-Much more resistant to tactical voting, and produces fairly constituent results with the addition of further candidates and from year to year.

Resource Implications

-Minimal. Several student groups already hold elections with preferential voting through Blackboard.