

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Student Association Elections Undemocratic

Tuesday, March 21, 2006

To the Editor:

In response to Matthew Stoller's recent letter to the editor ("New Election System Could Save GUSA," The Hoya, Feb. 28, 2006, A3), our organization, FairVote, The Center for Voting and Democracy, supports his arguments on Georgetown's need for reform in its undergraduate student assembly elections.

Upon looking at the past few GUSA elections, it is clear that recent presidents have not been elected with a majority of the vote. Most of the winning candidates, such as last year's victor Pravin Rajan (SFS '07), have only garnered pluralities in the mid-30s.

Think about this — more than 60 percent of Georgetown voters did not want Rajan as their first choice.

Here's where a simple method called instant runoff voting (IRV) would fit. IRV, which is currently implemented at about 35 universities across the country, including Johns Hopkins, Harvard and Duke, eliminates the "spoiler" problem that comes with having more than two candidates and protects majority rule. Voters rank candidates in order of preference. Those receiving the fewest votes are eliminated and their second choices are tallied until a candidate receives 50 percent of the vote plus one to win.

This month's delay in electing GUSA President Twister Murchison (SFS '08) after the disqualification of Khalil Hibri (SFS '07) also added to the unnecessary drama in the system. Although the use of IRV may not have avoided Hibri's Election Commission violation, maybe Murchison would have won the majority fair and square if it had been in place — thus eliminating all the extra waiting for a president to fully serve the student body.

As a student myself at Bradley University, I understand how important it is for constituents to have their voices heard by student assembly leaders who represent the majority.

So, Georgetown, isn't it time for a change?

Amber Krosel

Communications Intern

FairVote, The Center for Voting and Democracy