

Council Reports Majority and Minority Opinions on Amendment to Constitution

The majority report, sustaining the motion of the Student Council by which it is recorded as opposing the proposed amendment to the Student Council constitution.

The majority contentions in opposing the amendment follow:

I. The abandonment of the hold-over system.

One of the more important elements in the continued success of the Student Council as a governing body is a continuity of action. Holdover members of the Council were instituted as the only efficient method of assuring such continuity; the council, and the faculty advisors who aided in forming the present system agreeing on that point. The committee system of government will not permit such a complete change in the personnel of the Council as would inevitably ensue; if not annually, at least periodically.

The institution of a merit system such as has been begun, would invalidate, in some degree, the complaint that the holdover system insures the majority party of a continued majority, and further, it is evident that only by sheer coincidence could a party maintain a majority of this method if the opposing party can gain, and keep, a majority in the Council two years in succession.

II. Semi-annual elections.

This again is opposed upon the grounds that it will destroy continuity. The Council, in the past, has over and over again demonstrated that a student governing body, under the best conditions, with interested members, will take approximately three months to attain full efficiency. Replacement of one-half of the members each semester would result in a general confusion which eliminates the benefit of much of the work done the previous semester.

III. Destruction of a workable system.

The present system of student elections has served in good stead for ten years. It is the result of a good deal of rewriting and revision by former Councils, and by the faculty. Many conflicting reports have been received as to the efficiency of the proposed amendment. We have it on good authority that it can be and has been—at Michigan—manipulated, without any particular difficulty. It was used—for one year—at Kansas State, and discarded as not worth the trouble. It is not, as its proponents contend, simple in operation, but on the contrary is quite complicated. Whether or not it is too complicated to be used effectively cannot be decided until it is tried, but it seems unnecessary to throw out a usable system to try another which is so little known, and about which so much unfavorable comment has been made.

Political Issues Involved.

Undoubtedly all improvements in government are the result of political activity of some sort. However, it little behooves any one interested in student government to uphold those who, as a mere stalking horse for their political campaign, attempt to institute a major change in our form of government, a change the classification of which as an improvement is so questionable. The proponents of this scheme should remember that what amounted to a two party system existed on this campus prior to the recent realignment of political interests, and the Council managed to conduct its affairs with a certain degree of success, and justice to those members who were interested and able. Even from an objective viewpoint, the members of the Student Council who were also members of the party backing this amendment have not distinguished themselves in diligence, ability, nor interest in Council affairs. There has not, as yet, been any indication that the party mentioned has the backing necessary to warrant their speaking of themselves as representation of even a large minority of those whom they purport to represent. It has been evident that this plan was instigated, and has been publicized completely through the efforts of one man, and we question whether this man, or any other has the right to expect to accomplish an upheaval in governmental form through sheer power of lung and pen, rather than through popular support.

Especially is this true since once before this amendment was

placed before the student body, and at that time was so badly defeated that we have not felt it really merited our attention again.

Minority Report

It is unfortunate perhaps that both support and opposition to the Student Council Constitution are so clearly drawn along party lines, as is shown by the majority and minority vote at the last Student Council meeting. It was not proposed as a party issue; in fact, it was first suggested by Darrell Randall, a graduate student in economics, who had seen the Hare system in operation before he came to Nebraska. It was worked out in collaboration with Professor Aylesworth of the political science department, and last spring the proposal was presented to the Student Council as a non-partisan measure.

Since then it has been endorsed by the Barb party. On the other hand, it has been condemned by the Union party, by the Greek majority of the Student Council, and by two Greek editors of the Daily Nebraskan.

RECOGNIZE UNFAIRNESS.

There are very practical reasons for this party division. Under the present system, as is illustrated in the chart below, the party in power (the greek in this instance) can continue to dominate the council by election of only three of the twenty-two candidates at each election, while the out-party (the barbs) can gain a majority of one on the council only if they elect twenty-one of the twenty-two candidates. This is true because the eight holdover members are always chosen from the party in power. This year the council is greek. The eight hold-over members chosen are greeks. And this situation is but a repetition of last year's. Naturally, greek leaders because they know they can continue to dominate the council year after year by electing only three of the twenty-two candidates in each election, oppose the amendment. And the barbs, realizing the unfairness of this system are asking that it be changed.

There is a further explanation of the majority vote of the council. Eight of the present members of the council owe their seats for another year because of this system. It may be noted that Preston Hayes, the author of the majority report, has already been chosen at a Union faction meeting as next year's president of the Student Council. And what the Union party dictates the greek members do. It may also be noted that constitutionally the vote of the council is not called for. Amendments are adopted by the vote of the student body—not the council. The action was merely a political scheme to give adverse publicity to the proposal.

Before we discuss the arguments for the amendment let us see how both systems work under the present system. (1) Eighteen college representatives and four seniors-at-large are elected at the Student Council election. In case a party does not gain its quota of council members, it is given one member for every 125 votes at polls. Eight holdover members are also elected from the members of the outgoing council to serve for another term. As we explained, holdover members are chosen from the party with the majority on the council. Thus the council consists of between thirty and forty-five members, depending on the number elected by the list system of proportional representation.

Comparison Made.

Under the Hare system, as proposed, representation is given according to party strength at the polls. There are twenty members elected, ten at each semester election—eight from the city campus, two from the ag campus. In order to make comparisons we shall consider that the twenty are elected at the same election.

Here is how the two systems work in practice:

	OLD SYSTEM		NEW SYSTEM	
	Greek	Barb	Greek	Barb
Votes cast	1500	2500	1500	2500
Candidates elected	0	22	8	12
Seats filled by list system	12	0	8	12
Holdovers	8	0	8	12
Total mbrs.	20	22	16	24
Barb majority of 2 if				
Barbs win every			Proportional Barb	

post.		majority.	
Greek	Barb	Greek	Barb
1500	2000	1500	2000
3	19	9:1500	11:2000
9	1	9	11
8	0		
20	19	Proportional Barb	
Greek majority.	Barb	majority.	Barb
1500	1500	Greek	Barb
11	11	1500	1500
1	1	10:1500::10:1500	
8	0	10	10
20	12		
Holdovers make	Equal voting power:		
Greek majority of	equal representa-		
eight.	tion.		
Greek	Barb	Greek	Barb
1500	1003	1500	1000
13	9	12:1500::8:1000	
0	0		
8	0		
21	9	12	8

We have discussed so far only the reasons for party division on the amendment. It should be recognized, however, that the arguments presented by the framers of the amendment are not those which have brought on the party division. Here are the most important benefits of the proposal.

1. Fair representation of all groups according to their voting strength is provided through the Hare system of proportional representation. Article IV. Sec. 5.
2. Elections are simplified

and artificial restrictions as to class, college and sex are removed. Article IV. Sec. 3.

3. Membership is cut to twenty thus making a more active council. Article IV. Sec. 3.

4. The College of Agriculture is given a fairer representation on the Council. Article IV. Sec. 1.

5. Holdover members on the council are eliminated. Article IV. Sec. 1.

6. All committees including the judiciary are made responsible to the Student Council and all committees and boards appointed by the Council shall represent all parties proportionally. Article V. Sec. 3.

7. Rules for election can be changed by the petition of a majority of the students. Article IX, Sec. 2.

The Hare system of proportional representation provides actual representation for all groups according to their voting strength. It is simple in operation, yet hard to manipulate. It does not limit representation to parties. In fact, no matter how division lines are drawn the system is flexible enough to handle the situation with fairness to all groups or individuals. The Hare system is used in municipal elections of

New York City, and Cincinnati, Ohio, and by the English universities in electing members to parliament. It has also proved successful in many U. S. universities including Minnesota and New Mexico.

To Unify Campuses.

The proposed amendment recognizes that the Student Council is an all student organization deliberating upon matters of common interest only. As the Student Council constitutional itself states (Article III. Sec. 1), the council is "To regulate and coordinate the activities of all student organizations and groups whenever such activities are of general university interest. Lines of class, college and sex become unimportant when viewed in this larger whole.

The proposal on the other hand, does recognize that the University of Nebraska is composed of two campuses—a city campus and an agricultural campus. To unify adequately the two separate programs and functions on these campuses, the plan would give each college one member to every four from the city. (Under the present system they receive only one to every eleven, which is less than

(See REPORT, page 7)

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