

Editorial Opinion

Constitution Deficiencies

The revised Constitution presented to SGA Assembly by the Reorganization Committee Thursday would make some long-needed changes in the present system but also contains some glaring shortcomings and has a lot of wording that needs to be ironed out.

The proposed Constitution would give Assembly more power, e.g. all other governing bodies on campus would be subordinate to it; more purpose, e.g. Assembly could discuss and legislate on any topic of student concern; and more responsibility, e.g. Assembly would, with the advice and consent of the University Senate, establish regulations for student conduct.

But, SGA would be liable to run into a lot of interpretation difficulties in such phrases as "dealing with an all-University nature," and in the Elections Code, which leaves too much unrestricted power in the hands of the chairman.

But the most glaring deficiency is in the proposed system of representation. According to Duane Alexander, the SGA Reorganization Committee is already working on a substitute measure.

The trouble is that neither the basis for representation nor the method for elections are prescribed but are merely thrown into the hands of (and the control of) MRC, TIM, IFC and AWS.

As a basis for representation these four groups would insure that every undergraduate at the University was represented because every undergrad comes under one of these four governing bodies.

But the representation does not go far enough. In the case of MRC and AWS, representation should further be broken down into residence hall areas.

The Constitution merely says that MRC shall have nine representatives and AWS eight. But all nine of the MRC representatives could come from the first floor of the south wing of Hamilton Hall. This would leave no representation for North Halls, Pollock or Nittany. The same condition could exist within AWS with all the representatives coming from one area.

The Constitution should outline the on-campus representation specifically according to residence hall area, e.g. 3 for West, 3 for North, etc. The members of each residence hall area should vote only for the Assemblymen from their own area.

This would present the most representative government with each Assemblyman in closest contact with his constituency. Each elected Assemblyman could then set up regular weekly meetings in his own area to hear all views on student government from his constituency. Here's government at its grass roots.

As for elections procedure, letting this entirely under the control of the four bodies—MRC, TIM, IFC and AWS—is completely absurd. This would mean there could be four different ways of election to Assembly. IFC might say only phys ed majors with a 3.8 average could run and TIM might say only those on Council could run for SGA.

The Constitution must guarantee a uniform system for electing all Assemblymen.

Letters

Jr. Objects To Proposed Elex Code

TO THE EDITOR: The elections code of the proposed SGA constitution is dangerously undemocratic.

The power to nominate candidates for Assembly places in the hands of councils the power to deny a person the right to free and fair competition for a legislative position.

Experience has shown that organizations such as the councils can easily become clusters of self-interested people, pursuing ulterior motives. Councils will not nominate persons other than those with interests and motives similar to those of the councils' leaders.

To think for a moment that the councils appeal powers of the Elections Committee and the Supreme Court will provide the objective fairness which is the right of the constituents is ridiculous.

Members of Elections Committee and Supreme Court will fill those positions only after having scrambled through the lower prestige groups and will possess all the ulterior motives by which they have risen obscuring their judgment and impartiality.

The proposed elections code not only would provide the opportunity for the formation of such prestige groups, it would provide an incentive for them.

The Assembly will be a more significant and representative group if each member is elected from the candidates after free and equal opportunity, the Assembly will be totally unrepresentative if handfuls of prestige seekers nominate each other into office and pass legislation to perpetuate their power.

—Dennis A. Foranini, '62

On Reorganization

If the revised SGA constitution goes through the Assembly without change, political parties will virtually be destroyed and a path paved for a tight pyramid structure controlled at the top by such "in" groups as Lions Paw.

As the constitution now stands, AWS, MRC, IFC and TIM will control the nominations for the 27 Assembly seats. Just how these groups are to conduct nominations is not specified.

AWS could nominate nine blue-eyed blonds from Pollock 5 and ignore all other living areas.

The Elections Code, as it is now written, could make the committee head practically a dictator. Since we have seen the incompetent performances of Robert Umstead and several others, we cannot help but question the intent of this section.

If the nomination for the Assembly is left to AWS, MRC, IFC and TIM, candidates may no longer have to take stands on major All-University issues, they may just need an "in." It may be even more a matter of who you know and not what you can do.

This new constitution also limits the number of persons who can run for one seat to two people and makes no provision for running by petition. There is no room for "outsiders."

There is literally no reason to limit political parties' activity to the "top" positions and there are several reasons for them to continue to nominate the assemblymen.

Political parties often could give the newcomer to student government his introduction to the issues with which it is concerned. And, however slight this introduction may be, it is

certainly better than none at all.

Political parties could screen out some of the least feasible proposals concerning an issue and possibly formulate a more sensible approach than could students in six different areas campaigning on six different approaches none of which would gain enough support to pass. Student government might become more "mickey mouse" than ever on the Assembly level.

Of course, members of political parties do occasionally bring in new ideas that the "in" group might not like and we imagine this is part of the reason for limiting them in the new constitution.

We also cannot understand why the advisor to the student government should be the executive secretary to the Alumni Association. The Alumni Association has very little to do with undergraduate student government.

If the SGA must have an advisor specified in the constitution then it should be the chairman of the Senate Committee on Student Affairs or the special assistant to the President for Student Affairs. These men at least deal directly with student affairs even though they may not be members of the Lions Paw Alumni.

Mr. Alexander may have the greatest confidence in his proposals. We, however, do not.

—Nicki Wolford
Elaine Miele
Susie Linkroum

Senior Discusses Reorganization

TO THE EDITOR: Student apathy has not only been increased but existing unconcern has been accentuated by the befuddled actions of "Prexy" Haber and his fellow status seekers of SGA.

Reports filter out from secret meetings concerning the "great progress" made toward the reorganization of SGA. But what do Haber's constituents get — reorganization? No! Confusion? Yes!

If Haber and his cronies really wanted to learn how to lead and to reorganize, why didn't they apply for Advanced ROTC, an organization which they are all too quick to ridicule. Or can it be that Haber will enlist in the Peace Corps to contribute chaos to Laos?

—Richard D. Biddle, '61

Letters

Alexander 'Explains' Actions

TO THE EDITOR: Recently the SGA Reorganization Committee has drawn considerable fire from the Collegian. The reasons for the committee's actions, although they have been explained to the Collegian and to Assembly, have not appeared in print.

Since the SGA Assembly, gave the committee an unanimous vote of confidence when these reasons were presented to it (another fact which was not printed), I feel the students should be informed so that they too may judge.

When we began working on the constitution last fall, we were directed by SGA to work with the Senate Subcommittee on Organizational Control.

Several weeks ago, when most of our ideas were formulated, we met with the group with preliminary SGA discussion scheduled. Other business lasted too long and it was decided to see the committee members individually.

I went over the whole constitution with the authorities on Political Science and Parliamentary Law who are on the committee to be sure no necessary details had been omitted, but did not get to see the chairman. This is why he later said he had not seen the Constitution. But all of this was not reported.

The meeting of March 16 was, as I told the Collegian reporter, to go it again with both student leaders and administrative personnel and check for flaws or small details we overlooked. There was no intention of giving it approval or disapproval without having it approved first by the Assembly. But this is not what was reported.

Our committee meetings were held in confidence — this is true. But we realized that we were dealing with the most controversial topic in student government, and that if only parts were revealed at one time, rumors could start that SGA was taking over all groups, and this could have

killed the constitution.

All the ideas are not only our own. We talked with student leaders and old and present Assembly members, and found out their ideas, whether they were aware of the purpose at the time or not, and Collegian articles brought out other ideas.

On several occasions I told the Collegian specific plans under discussion. The only thing secret was the discussion at the meetings. Remember also that the United States Constitutional Convention held all its meetings in secret, a factor to which many political scientists today credit the wisdom and success of the U.S. Constitution.

As to the number of meetings, we held three last semester and four in the six weeks of this one, three of which were sorority rush when the world itself stops. Besides, is the committee that meets most often the most efficient? Certainly not.

No written reports were given to Rules Committee because that would have destroyed the purpose of our confidential meetings. However, Rules Committee has not received any written committee reports all semester except those prepared for the Assembly, and we did give the Chairman an oral report.

Elections can be postponed if need be, and no confusion need arise. The final Constitution was submitted to the Assembly rather than any other group because our committee was set up by the Assembly to report to the Assembly, not to anyone else.

When the Assembly heard these reasons, the committee received a unanimous vote of confidence. We hope the students will consider this also, but most of all we ask that the new Constitution be considered on its merits.

—Duane Alexander,
Chairman, SGA Reorganization Committee
•Letter cut

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56 Years of Editorial Freedom

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STAFF THIS ISSUE: Headline Editor, Vicki Wentz; Wire Editor, Dave Runkel; Night Copy Editor, Polly Dranov; Assistants, Dot Drasher, Carmen Zetler, Trudy Rohrer, Arlene Lantzman, Steve Monheimer, Connie Ulerich; and Joanne Phillippi.



Gazette

- TODAY
- Alpha Kappa Psi, 7 p.m., Phi Mu Delta
 - Angel Flight, 6:30 p.m., 214 HUB
 - Association of the U.S. Army, 8 p.m., 217 HUB
 - Bloodmobile, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., HUB card room
 - CBA Student Council, 6:45 p.m., 314 Boucke
 - Central Regional Extension Conference, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., HUB assembly room
 - Communion Service, 6:15 p.m., Wesley Foundation
 - Education Student Council, 6:45 p.m., 217 HUB
 - ICG, 8 p.m., 203 HUB
 - IFC Career Day, Service Committee, 8 p.m., 212 HUB
 - IVCF, 12:15 p.m., 217 HUB
 - Graduate Club, 7 p.m., 215 HUB
 - LA Student Council, 6:30 p.m., 212 HUB
 - Newman Club, 7 p.m., HUB assembly room
 - Nittany Grotto, 7:15 p.m., 121 MI
 - Panel, 6:30 p.m., 203 HUB
 - Placement, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., 203 HUB
 - Schuhplattlers, 7 p.m., HUB ballroom
 - TIM Movie, noon, 6 p.m., HUB assembly room
 - University Party, 9 p.m., 212 HUB
 - West Halls Judicial, 12:15 p.m., 217 HUB
 - Young Republicans, 8 p.m., 218 HUB
- HOSPITAL
- Rosalind Gill, Joyce Leonard, Barbara Maley, Cynthia DePalma, Virginia Howard, Margaret Padisak, Mary Sabolste, Diane Justin, Eugenie Rusben, Judith Swain, Katherine Poor, Frank Vincente, Earl Ervey, Raymond Griffith, Gerald Yarnell, Edward Moran, Alfred Ando, Thomas Reeves, David Kendall, Richard DiMarcello, Edward Small, Wendell Pass, William Wilkens, Lewis Price, and Anthony D'Angela.