

# Bills may be political games

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Three bills to be considered by the SGA senate Thursday have caused some student leaders to accuse the Machine, a campus political coalition of greek organizations, of gerrymandering and playing covert political games.

One bill proposes the elimination of the three graduate school seats in the senate. If the bill is passed, graduate students will be counted as part of the undergraduate division corresponding to their courses of study.

The proposed legislation, written by Graduate School Sen. Grady Perdue, states that "in the apportionment of seats between the various schools, no seats will be especially reserved for the graduate school."

MEN'S Dorm Sen. Joe Barganier said the proposed elimination of the graduate school seats is nothing more than blatant gerrymandering on the part of the Machine.

The Machine is an organization comprised of 24 fraternities and sororities.

"If this bill is passed, you're saying that graduate school students don't have representation in the senate," Barganier said.

He said the Machine wants to see the graduate seats taken out of the senate, because graduate students do not tend to support the Machine.

"THE GRADUATE students have grown up," he said. "They've gotten out of the game."

Barganier said the Machine is doing everything it can to ensure its dominance of

future student elections.

"They're looking out for the future," he said. "Never again will the Machine lose its power."

Men's Dorm Sen. John Merrill said he will not support the proposal to eliminate the graduate seats.

"BY DOING away with the graduate seats, you'll be doing away with their representation," he said. Graduate students "won't know what's going on. They won't have anyone catering to their needs."

Perdue said he proposed the legislation to eliminate the graduate seats, because he thinks it is in the best interests of his constituents.

"I wouldn't have done it otherwise," Perdue said. "The reasoning behind this is that graduate students are not a homogeneous group. A graduate student working on a master's degree in medieval English literature has nothing in common with someone working on a doctorate degree in electrical engineering except neither of them are undergraduates," he said.

Perdue said students working on master's degrees in English have more in common with students working on undergraduate degrees in English.

HE SAID such graduate students would be better represented by someone in their corresponding undergraduate divisions than by a graduate student with whom they may have little in common.

"What this bill does is obviously include the representative division of the Graduate School in with the corresponding undergraduate division," he said.

To ensure the needs of graduate students

are met, Perdue said, the three graduate senators are sponsoring a resolution calling for the reactivation of the dormant Graduate School Council.

"These people (who are on the council) will be in a position to work with the Graduate School on problems that are particular to graduate students as a whole," he said.

THE ELIMINATION of the graduate seats does not deny representation to anyone, Perdue said.

"I have not had any member of the senate or any graduate student come to me with any complaints about this legislation," he said.

Another bill, drafted by Arts and Sciences Sen. Ralph Holt and Commerce and Business Administration Sen. Chris Harmon, proposes a new method of determining winners of SGA senatorial elections.

If the bill is approved, seats belonging to schools or divisions that have more than one senate seat will receive a specific designation.

"ANY STUDENT registering to run for one of these seats must register to run for a specific seat, such as 'Off Campus Senator, Seat #1,'" the bill states.

Holt said the purpose of that bill is to "tighten up the rules that are already in the constitution."

Holt said the legislation will make more clear the procedures for declaring winners and determining the need for runoffs.

"A definite winner is going to come out of that," he said. "It makes it more clear."

THE PLAN to require candidates to run for specific senate seats is not fair,

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Barganier said. He said the plan was proposed to keep Machine candidates from running against one other.

"I don't see any reason for that," he said. "There's no sense in it. It'll always be a Machine person running against a nonMachine person."

Also, the bill states, in its original form, that no ballots cast for write-in candidates will be counted unless the candidate registers with the SGA elections chairman. The deadline for this registration would be 5 p.m. the day before the election.

Barganier said that proposed legislation also is unfair.

"IN OTHER words, a person can't be elected just by popular

support," he said. "He has to know beforehand he's going to get support. All that does is let the opposition, the Machine in this case, know who's going to be on the ballot."

Merrill said he thinks the bills were proposed to restrict student involvement in campus politics.

"A political organization on this campus would like to reduce the political participation of the majority of students," he said.

In its present form, the third bill, also written by Holt and Harmon, would make illegal the distribution of election materials within or outside any University building.

SGA PRESIDENT Ray Pate said he was not aware of the bills before he heard complaints about them.

"In my opinion, there was nothing about these bills that was intended to be unjust or unfair," he said. "But before I was going to sign them, I wanted to get more student input, because questions were beginning to arise."

Pate said he met with Perdue and former SGA President John Bolus to discuss the bills. He said that meeting resulted in amendments that will be made to the bills.

According to Perdue, one amendment that will be made to the bills will be the deletion of a section requiring write-in candidates to register with the elections chairman before the election.

THE BILL concerning the distribution of election materials on election day will be amended,

Perdue said. With the amendment, materials relating to any specific candidate could not be distributed in academic areas, in buildings containing polling places or within 100 feet of buildings containing polling places.

Bolus said he was surprised the bills were brought up.

"I was really afraid of what might be the reasoning behind them," Bolus, who was the non-Machine candidate in the 1983 SGA election, said. "I've talked to Grady, and we've tried to get all the reasoning behind the bills out in the open."

"I hope that anyone who does have concerns about (the proposed legislation) will express their concern to the appropriate senators," he said.