91-UWB-02

A University-wide Bill to Change the Voting Method in SGA Elections to Ranked Choice

Introduced by: Senator Spencer Bivins
Sponsor(s): Senator(s) Alhi Nguessan, John Le, Ashleigh Cochran, Sabrina Jamil, Fati Toure
Liaison(s) Regan Williams, Bethany McCullough, EVP Jeimy Martinez
Submittal Date: 01/19/21
First Reading: 01/21/21
Second Reading: 02/18/21
Third Reading:
Date Voted On: 02/18/21

WHEREAS, Too often, candidates win elections despite being opposed by most voters, and,
WHEREAS, In elections with more than two candidates, candidates can and do win even when
less than half of voters support them, and,
WHEREAS, Voters in Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) elections report more positive campaigning
and greater satisfaction with their elections\(^1\), and,
WHEREAS, Democracy is strongest when more voices are heard, and,
WHEREAS, With RCV elections, our Student Body can enjoy the benefits of voting in a single,
more representative, and higher-turnout election, and,
WHEREAS, instant runoff voting ensures that a candidate wins an election with majority
support without the need for a runoff election, while encouraging positive campaigning,

THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE UNIVERSITY-WIDE SENATE OF THE STUDENT
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY THAT

Section 1: Title VIII: Election Code, Article 10 – Election Results, Section D of the SGA Bylaws be
amended from, “

D. Runoff Elections

  a. In the event of a runoff election, all tickets will continue with their violation points
they received during the general election.
  b. Candidates in a runoff election must attend a mandatory meeting with the Chief
Elections Commissioner if it is the Presidential race or the Elections Commission Chair if
it is a campus specific race. Failure to do so will result in their disqualification.
  c. Within two business days of the announcement of a runoff election, the date and
time of the mandatory meeting with the Elections Commissioner must be announced.
  d. Within two business days of the announcement of a runoff election, the formal runoff
election dates, including the 24-hour voting cycle and announcement of runoff election
results, must be announced.

\(^1\) https://www.fairvote.org/data_on_rcv#research_rcvcampaigncivility
e. The violation decision appeal deadline for runoff elections is one business day from the date of the Elections Commission’s ruling on any given violation.

f. In the case of a runoff election, the Financial Disclosure Form will not be due until 5:00 p.m. on the Monday following the election.”

d. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)

a. For the purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:

i. "Ranked Choice Voting" means a method of casting and tabulating votes that simulates the ballot counts that would occur if all voters participated in a series of runoff elections with one candidate eliminated after each round of counting. In elections using the Ranked Choice Voting method, voters may rank the candidates in order of preference.

ii. "Advancing candidate" means a candidate who has not been eliminated.

iii. "Continuing ballot" means a ballot that is not an exhausted ballot.

iv. "Exhausted ballot" means a ballot on which there are no choices marked other than choices for eliminated candidates.

b. For Executive and Senate Races, the ballots shall be counted by the method of ranked choice voting, prescribed herein:

i. The initial round of counting shall be a count of the first choices marked on each ballot. If any candidate receives a majority of the first choices, that candidate shall be declared the winner, pending ratification.

ii. If no candidate receives a majority of first choices, there shall be a second round of counting. The last-place candidate shall be eliminated, and all the continuing ballots shall be recounted. Each continuing ballot shall be counted as one vote for that ballot’s highest ranked advancing candidate.

iii. If no candidate receives a majority at the second round of counting, there shall be a third round of counting, continuing in the manner prescribed above.

iv. The process of eliminating the last-place candidates and recounting all the continuing ballots shall continue until one candidate receives a majority of the votes in a round. The candidate who receives a majority of the votes in a round shall be declared the winner, pending ratification.

v. When a ballot does not list a preference for any given round, it shall not be counted in that round or any subsequent round.

vi. If there are not sufficient second and lower choices for any candidate to receive a majority, the candidate with the highest number of votes shall be declared the winner, pending ratification.

vii. When a ballot becomes an exhausted ballot it shall not be counted in that round or any subsequent round.
Section 2: Title VIII: Election Code, Article 10 – Election Results, Section A. Executive Races of the SGA Bylaws be amended from, “

A. Executive Races
   a. The winners of the races for executive positions (President, EVP, and Speaker) shall be determined by plurality vote of votes cast for each position.
   b. A candidate must receive a vote count of at least fifteen percent more than the other candidates to be declared the winner of the race.
   c. If one of the candidates does not receive 51 percent of the vote but they do achieve a plurality vote with a margin of at least 10 percent, they are declared the winner of the race.
   d. In the case that a candidate does not receive a 10 percent margin from the candidates, or there is a tie, a runoff election will be held consisting of the two candidates with the highest number of votes in the general election.”

to,”

A. Executive Races
   a. The winners of the races for executive positions (President, EVP, and Speaker) shall be determined by a majority of the first-choice votes for each position.
   b. A candidate must receive a majority of the first-choice votes to be declared the winner of the race.
   c. If one of the candidates does not receive a majority of the first-choice votes, then the process for counting ballots in Section D. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) shall be followed until a winner of the race is declared.”

Section 3: Title VIII: Election Code, Article 10 – Election Results, Section B. Senate Races, be amended from, “

B. Senate Races
   a. Atlanta Campus: Candidates running for a college or school seat shall run in conjunction with all other candidates within their college or school. The candidates who receive the most votes shall be seated into each available seat within their respective college or school. (Ex: If there are five seats available within a college and ten students run, the top five students who received the most votes shall be seated).
   b. Perimeter Campuses: Candidates running for a Senator position shall run in conjunction with all other Senate candidates from their campus. The six candidates who receive the most votes on their campus shall be declared the winners.”

to,”

B. Senate Races
Student Government Administration
91st Administration (2020-2021)
sga.gsu.edu

a. Atlanta Campus: Candidates running for a college or school seat shall run in conjunction with all other candidates within their college or school. The candidates who receive a majority of the first-choice votes shall be seated into each available seat within their respective college or school. (Ex: If there are five seats available within a college and ten students run, the top five students who received the most first choice votes shall be seated).

b. Perimeter Campuses: Candidates running for a Senator position shall run in conjunction with all other Senate candidates from their campus. The six candidates who receive a majority of the first-choice votes on their campus shall be declared the winners.”

Section 4: This legislation shall take effect in the 92nd Administration upon passage by the Student Government Association, the welfare of the students requiring it.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE STUDENT SENATE: VOTE for 13 against 0 abstentions 2

ACTION TAKEN BY THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Signature Kaelen Thomas Date 02/18/2021