

# Students Question Possibility of SGA Voting Reform

By Stephen Fasulo II

Students who attended The Catholic University of America during the Fall Semester and voted in the Student Government Association, or SGA's, voting process to determine new senators will remember a voting process that differed from previous elections. Instead of being able to vote for just your class and major's representatives, the voter was able to vote for every single class and major's election. That might have seemed odd to anyone who was running, or to anyone who was voting. With voter fraud such a prevalent issue in today's politics, what was the student government's plan to avoid that?

To put it simply, counting the votes. The votes cast were each observed and judged by the current officers of the student government at the time, and then were counted as valid or invalid based on a criteria set by the Student Government Association. Any vote that was cast that had too many votes for too many candidates or that was unable to be connected to a student was deemed invalid. The votes that were cast were judged by the major and year of the student to be valid, possibly disregarding what was potentially a very high number of votes simply based on criteria that could be invalidated by a mistake or confusion about the user interface of the voting page on the nest. Add to that the controversy surrounding the school of Social Service, in which an error mandated the votes being validated by hand.

When this information was made known, there was a controversy surrounding it. The process was viewed as confusing and unfair to the student body, and the question of unfair voting practices came up.

"Even if those on SGA validated the votes fairly the fact that they, in theory, could have rigged the votes is not okay," said Tess Plaza, who was a freshman Media Studies major during the time of the controversy.

With an upcoming Student Government Association election happening, the question is raised: will there be any reform to the voting process in the upcoming elections? The answer remains unknown to the Catholic University community. Student Government Association President, Anne St. Amant, and Vice President, James Benedeck, along with the Senior Associate Dean of Students & Director of Campus Activities, Kathryn Jennings, have declined to comment on any voting reform in the next Student Government election.

"If I knew that the process was flawed to the point where my vote would not matter, I would be less inclined to vote," said Maggie Buday, a senior English major. "If it is flawed, less people will vote."

"I'm suspicious to whether my vote actually mattered," said Taryn Lowney, a junior Psychology major. "I don't think they'll change it because they got exactly what they wanted. They can control the vote and manipulate it any way they want. Why would they change?"

There is no known plan for the Student Government Association to change the current system, and it seems that many members of the student body would like the process to change in the future. For now, the current system is still in place.