



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

UNIVERSITY SENATE

1100 Marie Mount Hall  
College Park, Maryland 20742-4111  
Tel: (301) 405-5805 Fax: (301) 405-5749  
<http://www.senate.umd.edu>

February 7, 2011

Professor Linda Mabbs  
Chair, University Senate  
1100 Marie Mount Hall  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742-7541

Dear Chair Mabbs:

The Elections, Representation, & Governance Committee (ERG) received a letter from the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) requesting advice on a proposal entitled "Change Process for Handling Tie-Breaks in Senate Elections". The ERG reviewed the proposal and discussed possible solutions at the February 2, 2011 meeting.

The ERG Committee agreed with the proposer that a coin-toss to break election ties is unsatisfactory. The committee also acknowledged that re-polling the constituency in question through a run-off vote, although a clear answer in keeping the choice within the constituency is not the best option because of the complications of timing and administrative burden of the re-poll. The low participation rates in regular elections were also considered while making this decision.

The ERG Committee also considered the option from the proposal of having a Senate-wide vote. This was perceived as moving too far from the current voting practice, as it would allow for members of other constituencies to vote on the tied constituency.

It is the suggestion of ERG that instead, the elected members from the relevant constituency serving on the SEC review the original candidacy statements of the tied individuals and select the winning candidate. Though the member(s) of the SEC constituency may not represent the college from which the tied candidates appear (e.g., in the case in question, from ARHU), it was felt that this kept with the practice of shared governance because the SEC members are elected members representing their entire constituencies. ERG also advises that if, for those constituencies on SEC that have more than one representative (undergraduate students, and faculty and staff in certain instances), the selection results again produce a tie, the Chair of the SEC will then select the final winner.

The ERG Committee understands this is a complicated issue and that this advice will only be taken under consideration by the SEC, and that ultimately the SEC will make the decision it feels best keeps with the tradition of shared governance within the Senate.

Sincerely,

Marc Pound  
Chair, University Senate Elections, Representation, and Governance Committee

CS/gf

Cc: Reka Montfort, Executive Secretary and Director, University Senate