

Machine may have hand in ballot count

By Peter F. O'Connell and Roman Schauer

A coed identified by sources within the Machine as Delta Zeta's senior representative to the Machine is one of two student members of the board overseeing Tuesday's elections.

Lauren Lowery was appointed to the six-person Elections Board by Harry Knopke, vice president for student affairs.

Knopke said when he placed Lowery on the board he did not know she was a member of the Machine.

Lowery declined to comment on whether she is a member of the Machine and said her SGA experience qualifies her for the position. She said she has been "fair" and has "followed the rules."

Independent SGA Presidential

candidate Michael Bolden objected to Lowery's presence on the board.

"I think (Lowery serving on the elections board) undermines the entire election process," Bolden said. "I think the administration should remove her. She should be immediately removed by Harry Knopke."

Bolden also said he will challenge SGA President John Coleman, Vice President Jackie Wuska and Treasurer Joey Strength for their ex-officio positions within the Machine.

"I don't think they should serve another day," Bolden said.

Wuska confirmed her ex-officio status but said she never attended any Machine meetings. Neither Coleman nor Strength could be reached for comment.

Bolden said after he talks with the Office of Student Life and Knopke, he will decide if he wants to challenge Lowery's appointment.

SGA independent vice-presidential candidate Brian Mixon also

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questions Lowery's involvement with the Elections Board.

"If that's true, then I think she (Lowery) should do us all a favor and resign from her position," Mixon said.

SGA Machine-backed presidential candidate Trey Boston said he had no problem with Lowery's placement on the board.

"I think she'll be fair," Boston said.

SGA independent candidate Addrian Brooks said he may challenge Lowery's appointment but that as of Sunday night he had not decided.

"I would like to express extreme concern," Brooks said. "A person in the Machine does not need to be in that position."

Knopke said he did not interview Lowery prior to her appointment, and said he appointed her on the basis of a recommendation from the Office of Student Life. Lowery said Anne Hornsby, chairperson of the Elections Board and assistant director of the Office of Student Life, recommended her for the position.

Hornsby said Saturday she was not aware that Lowery was a Machine representative.

Bolden said Office of Student Life members told him they were aware "of people in subversive organizations" within student government.

"I don't think the administration views the Machine with the alarm which they should," he said.

Hornsby said the student members of the board have the same responsibilities as any other board member. According to the Student Affairs Handbook, these responsibilities include:

- Administering all aspects of election day voting.
- Maintaining security of all used and unused ballots.
- Supervising the counting of all ballots (by machine or by hand).
- Investigating and hearing all alleged campaign and election day rules violations and any voter tally complaints.

Most ballots will be tallied by the testing service in Rose Administration building, but board members will count all write-in ballots by hand, Hornsby said. Lowery and Lebaron Mack, the board's other student representative, will be "counting votes as well, just like the rest of us," she said.

Hornsby also said, however, that controls are in place to ensure that

ballots are counted fairly. Representatives from each campaign and The Crimson White will be present as the ballots are being counted.

Hornsby said Lowery will not have lone access to the Alpha List. The Alpha List contains the marked names of all students. Only one Alpha List exists for each SGA election, and as students vote their names will be marked off this list.

Knopke agreed that under the current election system "one person couldn't mishandle an election, or change the outcome of an election."

The presidential candidates agreed that it would be hard for one person to change the outcome of the election.

The administration took control of SGA elections and implemented a variety of electoral reforms last year, following charges of massive voter fraud in the 1989 election of Lynn Yeldell as SGA President. Reforms included the restriction of all voting to one central location, Ferguson Center, and the use of just one Alpha List for each SGA election.

Lowery characterized her service on the board as "excellent," adding she was particular proud of her role in the production of the SGA Voter's Guide.