

▶ Opinions about the administration's actions vary

By KEVIN STOKER

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One week after uniting to celebrate the football team's national championship, University of Alabama students are split over the administration's suspension of elections and the student government.

"It's time for something to change. We think it's a crock that you have to be Greek to get into student government," said Mary Moran, an independent student from Atlanta.

"Without a doubt we are the last of what we know as the Student Government Association,"

said Mark Bain, president of the now-defunct organization.

"The administration is trying to create a utopian government in which everybody is represented," Bain said. "What's happened is that this situation on campus is so pathetic that students don't want to get involved."

The administration disbanded the SGA after Minda Riley, one of the presidential candidates, was assaulted in her home.

"Minda's incident was the last straw," said Kathleen Randall, director of Student Life.

Another incident included allegations Miss Riley's campaign had bribed another independent candidate, Christa Pettway, in an attempt to get her to drop out of the race, said elections Chairman

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Students

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Clay Cook.

Ms. Randall said the suspension of student government was long overdue. Student politics and government "had gotten out of hand" and something had to be done, she said.

"The (SGA) senate was not a body that would reform itself," she said. "Therefore, changes were slow in coming."

Student officials contend the administration wants more influence and control over student government.

Jarrod Nackley, administrative assistant to the SGA president, said the suspension of student government has nothing to do with the violence against Miss Riley.

"The outcome of this will be an additional layer will be added to SGA — an approval layer," Nackley said. "There's no layer there now. That's where our autonomy comes from."

Colby Allsbrook, special assis-

tant to the president, said he agreed with the decision to postpone elections, but the suspension of student government is directly related to the Machine.

"I don't see how it isn't the Machine," Allsbrook said. "It's much like a political party, albeit with a complete monopoly over a special group."

That group is made up of 27 white fraternities and sororities.

"When you say Machine, you are talking about the Greeks," Allsbrook said. "If the Greeks didn't lead this campus, no one else would. There's a lot of Greek national and state leaders. A lot of being a Greek means being a leader."

A fraternity member with a lot of Machine connections said the Machine consists of two representatives from each fraternity and sorority. He asked that his name not be used.

"The Machine president has more power than the SGA president," the fraternity member said. "The senate is controlled by the Machine. Trey Boston (last year's Machine-backed SGA president) vetoed a bill the senate passed, and

the Machine was not happy."

During the past few years, the Machine has split into two factions, the student said. The "old guard" is dominated by the traditional fraternities while the "new guard" is made up of more contemporary fraternities and sororities, including Miss Riley's sorority, Phi Mu.

The real campaign for SGA positions goes on within the Machine selection process, the student said.

"The Machine to me is a political party like the Republicans and the Democrats," he said. "We have an agenda. The reason the Machine operates in secrecy is because if it comes above ground, it would have to conform to all the rules of campaign financing."

The Machine's secrecy is what bothers Tom Buckley, managing editor of the *Crimson White*. "When it's underground there is no accountability to anyone," he said.

Buckley, a doctoral student from Mobile, said the administration's suspension of SGA will wound the Machine because it will no longer have control of the SGA's \$300,000

budget.

"If they do away with SGA for six months and rewrite the constitution, they will still have the people that manipulate the system," Buckley said.

He opposed the administration's action because it will take power away from the students and will not stop the Machine.

Randall said this is not an attempt to take power away, but to give students an opportunity to come together and form their own government.

But the current plan places the responsibility on the Council of Presidents, a part of the Coordinating Council for Student Organizations that reports directly to the office of Student Life.

For many independent students, having the administration reform the SGA is better than having the Machine continue its domination.

"It's probably the best thing right now," said Angela Washington, an independent from Tuscaloosa.

(Kevin Stoker is a journalism professor at the University of Alabama)