Congress vote recalled

Electoral process suspected to be tainted; new poll Friday

EDITOR'S NOTE:
The Anchor EXTRA is an unscheduled response to late-breaking news on the Hope College campus. Because the issue of stu-
dent government is one of great impor-
tance, we felt it imperative to put to-
gether a publication that would clarify the
eventual situation.

Gray areas

- People voting were
told who to vote for
at the polls, a viola-
tion of article 2.5 and
2.10 of the bylaws.
- Ballots were
printed incorrectly as
per article
2.2 of the bylaws.
- When ballots were
counted, there were
5-6 groupings of
approximately 3-4
ballots, folded to-
gether, all for the
same person.
- Ballots were left
unattended in the
Student Congress
Office for over an
hour after election
hours.
- The ballots were
left unattended for an
unknown time during
poll worker changes.
This was noted
in the Maas lobby.
- Inconsistent
enforcement of rules
pertaining to:
- a) Anchor essays-
deadlines not fol-
lowed, candidates
called and reminded
after deadline.
- b) Speeches—some
candidates not al-
lowed to
give speech together.
- Others were.
- Ballots were
handled by election
workers.
- Candidates were
given help with cam-
paign publicity and
used resources not
available to all stu-
dents (i.e. Anchor, SAC,
Union Desk equip-
ment).
- Only one of the
election booths contained
permanent markers for making
ID's, a system that helped
us keep track of those who had voted.

JULIE BLAIR
editor-in-chief

VanEden '97

Bielasukas '97

Smith '97

The closest thing to a presiden-
tial election existing came in
the spring of 1993 when then-Presi-
dent Molly Moore ('93) resigned
from office amid ugly and uncer-
tain situations of power struggles between
cabinet members.
Congress agreed candidates
could again campaign for
next year's election, a point of con-
tention among representatives
who feared some may not get a
fair shake and a chance to clear up
the circumstances surrounding
the re-election.

The other option was to force
each candidate to rip down
their advertising and convince
well-meaning friends to bash us
for fear of having their names
stuck on the ballot for violating
the agreement.

"How would I do that," asked
presidential candidate Matt Fretz
('99), "when I have signs up in
all the girl's bathrooms all over
campus? That would take for-
ever."

But this time the candidates
only have two days to infuse their
programs. Ballots can be picked up Fri-
day at the Student Union Desk
from 9 a.m. until lunchtime; at
lunch the polls will move to ei-
ther the Gilmore or Maas side
of Phelps. During the hours be-
 tween lunch and dinner Con-
gress members will be at
VanWyle library.

During the dinner hours
the will return to either the Gilmore
or Maas side of Phelps.

"Having ten things on a list is
disturbing," said Cottage Rep
Hotchkin. "We need to do this
election right so that next year it doesn't
come around and kick us in
the butt again."

President

Cook 29.3%
DeWitte 26.5%
Fretz 25.3%
Herriman 11.1%
Monty 6.3%
other 1.5%

vice president

Whitfield 44.4%
Kleesman 33.5%
Clindt 10.5%
Landolt 10.1%
other 1.8%

*Percentages from the 1,033 total vote

Fingers pointing to fraudulent
ballot manipulation, an incompetent
student government and a student body
swept by unethical intentions
led Student Congress representa-
tives to void last Friday's elec-
tion of Ryan Cook ('97) and
Katy Whitfield ('98) as 1996-97
President and Vice President.

During the two hour long
evening meeting, Vice Presi-
dent Andrew VanEden ('97)
unveiled a laundry list of Friday's
tactics to void last Friday's elec-
tion. Fortyone voted to void the
nights events, seven abstained.

VanEden, constitutionally res-
ponsible for election measures,
said there was reason to believe
ballots were tampered with as 3-4
groups of ballots were counted,
indicating the same candidate.

Furthermore, he added, ballot
copies had been discovered
unattended, polls had remained open
for a half hour longer than
described in publicity and the bal-
lots had been prepared in alpha-
etical order versus in order of
release of candidates' petitions
as prescribed in the constitution.

Jeff Whitehor ('96) backed
VanEden, testifying that a
Congress poll worker had given
him advice as to which candi-
dates to choose, also a violation of
the constitution.

Other criticisms, VanEden
said, though not stated in the
constitutions, involved candidates
trying to allow to submit their
defense was trying to help
Congress members at
the time.

She then took responsibility
for some of the violations of the
bylaws, details she said later in
the evening, that were other
minute decisions, oversight,
or meant to be helpful to the can-
didates. For example, she said
"I am in complete shock that
this is happening," Bielasukas
responded. "I am not sure why
you are trying to impeach me.
Frankly I was trying to help
Congress.

Bielasukas said she had ex-
tended The Anchor essay
deadline because only three of the
nine candidates had come through
and she had a respon-
sibility to the public and the
newspaper to provide the full
statements.

The polls had been kept open
upon constituent demand, as
people were "still pouring in"
in minutes before closing.

"I did err in helping out with
publicity," Bielasukas said.
But Andrew didn't know how to do
the computer work—I did.

Markers for marking IDs,
a system that helped
us keep track of those who had voted.

Tyler Smith ('97), representa-
tive At-Large and presidential
candidate, slapped President
VanEden ('97) with the
responsibility for the invalid
election, asking Congress to
consider impeaching her.

"I'm too tired of not hearing
people accountable," Smith said.
"10s running the elec-
tion and she didn't bother
to check the rules. I'm so sick of
Student Congress complaining about higher
powers and we can't even take ourselves seri-
ously.

After turning over the gavel
to Off-Campus Representatives
and Parliamentarian Jeremy
VanEk ('96), Bielasukas agreed
the constitutional infractions
must have tainted the election
results.

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