

Attachment 2

Definitions of Electoral Systems

(Courtesy of Michael D. Martinez, Associate Professor - Department of Political Science, University of Florida, P.O. Box 117325, Gainesville, FL 32611-7325. Telephone (352) 392-0262 ext 282; fax (352) 392-8127.)

Plurality Voting

- also known as "First-past-the-post" or "Unitary Primary"
- Currently used in most of the United States, including federal, state, and county general elections in Florida
- One candidate is elected (single member district)
- Each voter votes for only one candidate
- Winner is the candidate with the most votes (a plurality, not necessarily a majority)

Plurality Voting with sequential run-off

- also known as "Unitary Primary and Run-off"
- Currently used in City of Gainesville and State of Louisiana (except in presidential elections)
- One candidate is elected (single member district)
- Each voter votes for only one candidate in each round
- If a candidate receives a majority of votes in the first round, s/he is elected
- If no candidate receives a majority of votes in the first round, the top two candidates go into a runoff
- see Professor Beck's handout

Alternative voting

- also known as "Instant Run-off Voting"
- Currently used in San Francisco, CA; Berkeley, CA; Ferndale, MI; Republic of Ireland (president); Australia lower house of parliament
- One candidate is elected (single member district)
- Each voter rank orders preferences
- If a candidate receives a majority of "first votes", s/he is elected
- If no candidate receives a majority of votes in the first round, losing candidates are eliminated and votes are transferred to remaining candidates until a candidate receives a majority of votes in that round
- see Professor Beck's handout

Single-transferable vote (in multi-member districts or at-large)

- also known as "Choice Voting" or "Preference Voting"
- Currently used in Cambridge, MA; Australia upper house of parliament; under re-consideration in British Columbia
- Multiple candidates are elected (multi-member districts or at-large)
- Each voter rank orders preferences
- Candidates who receive numbers of "first votes" over the threshold are elected
- If all seats are not filled, surplus first votes are transferred, and

losing candidates are transferred to remaining candidates until all seats are filled.

- see Professor Beck's handout and <http://www.citizensassembly.bc.ca/public>

Cumulative voting

- also known as ?

- Currently used in about 80 cities, counties, and school districts in the US, concentrated in Alabama and Texas; most adopted after actual or threatened legal action under the federal Voting Rights Act.

- Multiple candidates are elected (multi-member districts or at-large)

- Each voter is entitled to multiple votes (usually equal to the number of candidates to be elected), and may cast those votes in any manner s/he wishes (eg., five votes for one candidate, one vote for each of five candidates, or any other combination)

- Candidates with the most votes win (equal to the number of candidates to be elected); no run-off

Approval voting

- also known as ?

- Currently used in professional associations

- One or multiple candidates are elected (single-member districts, multi-member districts, or at-large)

- Each voter may cast as many votes as s/he wishes, without rank ordering preferences

- Candidates with the most votes win (equal to the number of candidates to be elected); no run-off

Proportional Representation

- also known as ?

- Currently used in the Netherlands, Israel

- Multiple candidates are elected (multi-member districts or at-large)

- Parties nominate lists of candidates (up to the number of seats to be elected)

- Each voters casts one vote for a party-list

- Parties are allocated seats based on the proportion of votes that each party receives