

APPROVAL VOTING IN PRACTICE

Abstract

Several leading professional associations have recently decided to use approval voting (AV). The largest of them, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), with more than 300,000 members, adopted AV in response to severe political conflicts. These involved difficulties with conventional plurality elections of precisely the sort that AV was designed to solve. This paper analyzes results of the first three multicandidate elections conducted by the IEEE in 1988 using the new system. Issues examined include participation rates, use of multiple votes, patterns of shared support, majority rule, AV-dominance, effects on outcomes, and encouragement of candidate entry. In general, AV appears to have had a successful test in the IEEE.