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NEWS

Students mock elect an Israeli parliament

By MEAGHAN DORFF
Staff Writer
March 23, 2006

Students passing through Towers Lobby yesterday had a chance to show their knowledge of Israeli politics — or confess their lack of it and learn a little something.

Panthers for Israel sponsored an Israeli mock election a week before the March 28 elections in Israel.

"The reception's been pretty positive from the student body," Panthers for Israel President Rebecca Van Wagner said, adding that the goal of the mock elections is to educate the community about Israel's status as a democratic state.

"We bring the idea home by letting people physically vote, physically choose," Van Wagner said.

Under Knesset, the 120-seat Israeli Parliamentary System, citizens vote for a party rather than a specific candidate. The party with the most votes then chooses the new Prime Minister.

Polarizing issues in the upcoming Knesset election include Palestinian statehood, West Bank Israeli Settlements and Jewish immigration to Israel.

Of the three leading parties, the Labor party and Kadima favor the creation of a Palestinian state, while Likud opposes both a Palestinian state and the dismantling of settlements.

Josh Wander, a graduate student, spoke Sunday for Panthers for Israel about the Israeli Electoral process. Wander, a dual citizen of the United States and Israel, served as an adviser to the Parliament in Nasset for four years.


"It looks like they're doing a great job," he said of the mock election.

Because Knesset only offers absentee ballots to navy members and diplomatic staff, Wander won't be able to vote in the March 28 election.

Freshman Bryce Bernard, who voted in the mock election, visits the Hillel Jewish Community Center in Oakland although he isn't Jewish.

"I'm into Israeli things," Bernard said, emphasizing his opinion about the mock election.

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