

## Padilla Elected Council President

By STEVE HYMON  
*Times Staff Writer*

Alex Padilla was unanimously elected Friday to a third two-year term as president of the Los Angeles City Council and Wendy Greuel swept the vote for the No. 2 slot, giving the two top posts to representatives of the San Fernando Valley.

It was a busy morning for the council, which squeezed in its regular Friday meeting between the interfaith service for new Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and his swearing-in ceremony.

After the service, the 13 members of the council — two seats are vacant — were escorted out of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels and onto a bus for the three-block journey to City Hall.

As president, Padilla will retain the power to shape the council's agenda at its thrice-weekly meetings. More important, the presidency allows him to assign council members to committees, where the nitty-gritty work of pending legislation takes place. Councilman Eric Garcetti mounted a challenge for the presidency but withdrew from the race in late May.

At 32, Padilla is the youngest council member but also has the most tenure, having been elected in 1999.

As with the new mayor, education has emerged as one of Padilla's key issues. This spring, Padilla and Jose Huizar, president of the Los Angeles Unified School District board, persuaded the council to form a 30-member commission to study the governance of the district.

The commission was sworn in Wednesday and begins meeting later this month.

"The education piece of it is personal with this council," Padilla said. "A lot of us are products of the Los Angeles public school system and now we're in position to do something about its problems."

Greuel made a run for the council presidency in 2003 but decided to pursue the No. 2 slot as president pro tem this year. Greuel, 44, has been on council since 2002 and has earned a reputation among her colleagues as a policy wonk.

Recently, Greuel has signaled that she wants to get more involved in transportation issues.

"I think we have to play a much larger role in finding ways to better use the transportation systems that we have," she said Friday.

"One of the things I'm most excited about is that the mayor is willing to go to Washington and Sacramento to demand that L.A. gets its fair share of transit dollars. He has the accessibility and the celebrity to make that happen."