Leaders look beyond campus bubble

Schmidt, Weber launch yearlong Global Water Initiative to bring clean water to African village

By MADELINE BUCKLEY
In Focus Writer

Student government aims to look at the “small things and the big things,” student body president Grant Schmidt said of his administration so far this year.

Schmidt and student body vice president Cynthia Weber have put in place some of the smaller things, like benches at Main Circle and mints in the dining halls.

But the duo is also looking to reach beyond the Notre Dame bubble.

This year, Schmidt and Weber launched the Global Water Initiative, a project where student government is raising money to build a well in an impoverished town in Africa to offer clean water to the residents.

The Initiative was part of their campaign platform from the beginning, and Weber said she was told that students wouldn’t care about it. The role of student government is to address the needs of the students themselves.

“If that complaint was present from students, typically they would say that’s not what student government should be doing.”

Grant Schmidt
student body president

“We have the small things and the big things. We have two different spectrums and two different focuses and that’s how it should be in our opinion.”

In the past, Weber said student government has raised money for smaller and more short-term events and issues, but this is the first time student government has undertaken a yearlong project focused on one social problem.

“I was interested in doing something kind of monumental for student government,” she said.

“The idea was to find a non-controversial issue and provide consistent education and fundraising on that same issue all year.”

And for Weber, the answer was simple Water.

“Communities have unclean drinking water and people are getting sick,” Weber said.

“The issue is cornerstone to so many other social problems.”

Student government is working with The Water Project, a non-profit organization that builds wells in poor areas of Africa and India where people commonly die of water-borne diseases. The wells offer a clean source of water and cost about $5,000 to build.

Schmidt and Weber said they are able to balance dealing with campus-related issues and the Global Water Initiative by delegating the work. Junior Rachel Roseberry and Sophomore Justin Pham are co-directors of the project.

“We really wanted to find a long-range social issue for student government to focus on,” Roseberry said. “A yearlong project is more unique.”

The goal of the project is to raise at least $5,000 this year to build one well, most likely in a village in western Kenya. Roseberry said.

So far, student government has sold T-shirts to raise money and awareness and has encouraged dorms to hold events to raise money. Howard Hall’s Totter for Water event earlier this year raised funds for the project.

The Office of Sustainability also pledged to donate the proceeds from the dorm energy competition, which ran through the month of November.

Next semester, student government plans to put “wishing wells” in the dorms for students to donate spare change and release a benefit CD featuring campus musicians, Weber said.

“I was worried when campaigning that this would be one of those things that fell by the wayside, but the student response has been overwhelming,” Weber said.

But Schmidt and Weber said people have asked why they are focusing on Africa when there is poverty in South Bend.

“Notre Dame does play a big role in the community and we have been doing things in South Bend, but we wanted to do something bigger,” Schmidt said.

We may not be able to give an apple to everybody but if we have one apple, we can still give it to somebody.”

Cynthia Weber
student body vice president

“We really put on a united front and push one cause,” she said. “Honestly, we may not be able to give an apple to everybody but if we have one apple, we can still give it to somebody.”

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Editor’s note: The Observer is publishing a comprehensive review of the Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s student governments. This issue is intended to illustrate for students what elected officials are doing in their name, so they can enter the election season fully informed.

Its intent is to provide an illuminating, unbiased assessment of the state of the Student Union.
Office of the Student Body President and Vice President

Schmidt, Weber address campus conveniences

Transpo, other administration initiatives help raise quality of life at Notre Dame while keeping students safe

By JOSEPH MACKAYH
In Focus Writer

When former student body president Bob Reish and then-vice president Grant Schmidt took office, their administration made a change in the guardianship of the guard, as it was the first time in three years members of former student body president Dave Barron’s administration had not controlled student government’s top office.

Last year, Schmidt and current student body vice president Cynthia Weber handily defeated the opposition tickets to extend the group’s legacy, despite conversations about changing the composition of the student body presidency.

In their campaign platform, Schmidt and Weber promised to continue many of the previous administration’s programs while also implementing several ideas of their own.

“This takes a common sense approach, and we’ve addressed the issues of most concern to students,” Schmidt said.

Focusing on the little things

Since taking office, Schmidt and Weber have made it a top concern of theirs to enhance student living on and off campus by increasing the number of small conveniences available.

Schmidt said many students often have a difficult time conceptualizing what student government does.

“If really do think that we’ve addressed campus conveniences in a different way,” he said. “I’ve been in student government for four years, and sometimes people say, ‘Hey I have no idea what you do.’”

While discussions about the intellectual life on campus may be stimulating for some, Schmidt said a primary complaint of many students was student government focused myopically on large initiatives while ignoring easy to implement ideas.

“My roommates (usually) don’t care about what I do,” Schmidt said of his work in student government. “But there recently have been several things that we’ve done that are relevant to them.

Among the small conveniences students have achieved or planned this year are the lowering of the prices in the Huddle, the renovation of the LaFayette arcade room, benches at main circle, mints in the dining hall and hot Grab ‘n Go options.

“We joke about mints in the dining hall and hot Grab ‘n Go options.

But they are the little things that we’ve worked on, but I think as a whole the ability to address the things that people actually care about so we’re not just up in our little student government office and putting each other on the back — that is the most relevant thing we’ve done,” he said.

Off-campus transportation

Coming into office last April, Schmidt and Weber immediately began working on their signature platform issue — off-campus transportation.

“Obviously this year we’ve highlighted off-campus living and off-campus safety because that was the thing that really rose to the top,” Schmidt said.

Schmidt said students would routinely complain about unpleasant experiences in South Bend cabs.

“The main concerns we had were the rates fluctuating, them not having correct change, some being kind of creepy and the general behavior of drivers,” he said.

Schmidt said he attended meetings with the owners of several cab companies and many of the drivers that service Notre Dame themselves to help work out solutions. Among the changes that were pre-paid tickets for cabs and a $2 flat rate to prevent cab drivers from taking advantage of students.

However, after several meetings with cab drivers produced few results, Schmidt and Weber turned their attention to creating Transpo, the reliability — and is free for students — made it an easy solution to solve the seemingly complex problems with cabs.

“The idea with Transpo too is that it is student driven,” he said. “So the idea with Transpo is that you know you have someone to rely on instead of just a driver getting in your back.”

Schmidt said the new Transpo route will also help improve community relations by keeping local, intoxicated students out of the streets late at night — a selling point he used to help convince local South Bend leaders that the Community/Campus Action Coalition (CAC)

“In my opinion it is a community relations effort because if people are walking home late you can hear them talking in the streets,” he said. “It’s keeping people in a group, keeping people on a bus and avoiding student complaints about safety issues, avoiding intoxicated people possibly walking.”

Schmidt said his position as a member of CACAC was crucial in finding common ground with community leaders.

“If I wasn’t present at CACAC I think the many people in the room trying to just receive in a completely different way by the city,” he said.

While Schmidt and Weber still receive a large amount of credit for the project, the Office of Business Operations actually negotiated the contract and final details.

In addition, Transpo route 7A is still very young — it was only first user student demonstration — and still in the testing phase. The project has a number of serious potential pitfalls, including destructive behavior on the bus or students being too loud while waiting at the stops, which could undermine the entire project.

Ultimately, the success of the Schmidt-Weber administration is tied to the success of Transpo route 7A, and if the project is delayed funding, next year by the South Bend City Council or shut down because of students’ behavior, the administration will have failed to address what Schmidt and Weber have identified as one of their signature issues:

“The 10,000 foot level”

While campus conveniences and improving local late-night transportation have been focal points of this administration, Schmidt said he and Weber have also been focusing on large issues “at the 10,000 foot level.”

These issues include the Global Water Initiative, improving rector relationships, conducting a serious discussion on the intellectual life at Notre Dame and, most pressingly, off-campus safety and police relations.

“If there was one big issue that Cynthia and I have had to deal with it was off-campus safety,” he said.

Schmidt made his presentation to the Board of Trustees on off-campus relations and has met several times with local police.

“In the meetings that we’ve had with South Bend Police, we’ve said we would like safety addressed, we like the presence of [SBPD] and we know there are areas of the city that deserve the same amount of attention,” he said. “We want to make sure students aren’t targeted.”

Schmidt said it is difficult to ask for more cops to improve student safety in the wake of incidents such as the abduction of two Holy Cross students on Notre Dame Ave. earlier this semester while requesting more leniency for party-thowers.

“You can’t say you want more cops and then be worried about [parties being broken up],” he said.

However, Schmidt said while local police have been receptive to talks, he has been unable to meet with the Indians State Police, whose excuse force is most often responsible for breaking up parties with what many students consider excessive force.

“Excise can show up whenever they want, as we’re in so they do. We can sit down and talk with SBPD, but it’s be honest with you, I don’t know how much the student body president can tell the excise police.”

I wish I could say something like, “Your slow your,” he said. “There’s only so much I can do.”

Schmidt said some of his talks with law enforcement have been very productive, and cited statistics showing game-day arrests went down this year as proof.

Campaign Promises

Implemented

- Off-campus transportation

- Continuing relations with the South Bend Common Council

- The development of an off-campus housing Web site

Abandoned

- Community summit

- Taxi reform (replaced by Transpo)

- Tax exemptions for text books

- Last Lecture series

Contact Joseph Mackayh at jmackah6@nd.edu

Grade: D+

Schmidt and Weber have proved effective at providing students with small conveniences such as the benches at Main Circle while also implementing big picture ideas such as the Global Water Initiative and the Transpo Route 7A. However, they have not excelled at the programming side of student government — a side which former student body president Bob Reish stressed in his administration. Also, it is still too early to determine the success of the new Transpo route this administration’s major project.
By SARAH MERVOSH
In Focus Writer

Student Senate participated in the Spring 2008 Senate, and their meeting this year, and its commitment to work on their goals while paying attention to small details — no easy feat. Senior student president Cynthia Weber, who leads the Student Senate, said she used meeting time to discuss resolutions and to keep senators informed about what the Senate is working on and to have discussions as a whole.

"Sometimes it’s really just about having a discussion because these people are elected in their dorm so they should have a pulse on dorm life," she said.

Senate engaged in er- ran
gable discussions during the two meetings this year, including a discussion on the intellectual environment on campus.

Most senators agreed that there was a lack of intelligent debate both inside and outside of the classroom compared to by League of Presidents. But senators also said Notre Dame had qualities that make the school better than Loyola. Weber pointed out what makes Notre Dame unique.

Senior Hwy was discussing with committee chairs to create a University-wide task force to increase student government’s role and to give students more responsibility.

The Social Concerns Committee worked on the Global Water Initiative, which raises money to fight water issues. Weber also said she was going to add more students to the committee.

The committee’s goal is to work on issues related to water usage, not the amount of money raised.

"Every project that you’ll see and every committee has pretty much been done without resolutions, because they’re always able to do these resolutions with these administrators," said Grant Schmidt, student body vice president.

Grant Schmidt student body vice president

The Student Senate as a whole engaged in productive discussions about issues that are important to the student body, and were able to gain a feeling for the student body without resolutions this year.

The Student Senate is a whole engaged in productive discussions about issues that are important to the student body, and were able to gain a feeling for the student body without resolutions this year. This makes their work invisible to the student body.

In the coming semester, Senate should work to increase their visibility and approachability so the student body can see what they are accomplishing.

Group addresses Library, football scheduling issues

By LAURA MCCRYSTAL
In Focus Writer

The Faculty Senate passed four resolutions this semester, making recommendations about the Howard Library, the Notre Dame Tech Week, and the Student Senate, according to Senate chair and associate professor Thomas Grosk.

"Perhaps the biggest issue we dealt with this year was the report on the Library," he said of their work this year.

Grosk said the academic affairs committee of the Faculty Senate conducted an extensive study of the Library, including interviews of more than 150 people in all department and colleges.

The recommendations passed in a library resolution included an emphasis on retaining and recruiting more subject librarians to build library collections and assist faculty members in finding the resources they need to complete their research, Grosk said.

The resolution also states that each department should conduct a review of library resources and recommend a list of required or non-essential books for the end of their course or the college.

Grosk said the final recommen- dation of the committee invited an external review of the University Library System.

"The Faculty Senate recom- mends that the Office of the Provost recruit an external consultant to perform an external review of the entire Library system," the resolutions states.

"That should be the production of an online self-assessment of their services and external review every 10 years," the resolution states.

The Office of the Provost agreed that the Library’s new strategic plan is a good opportunity for an external review of the Library system, Grosk said.

The committee was not able to schedule a meeting for the external review of the University Library System.

The Faculty Senate recom- mends that the Office of the Provost submit its initial report on the Student Senate Strategic Planning arrangement for an external review of the entire Senate system and the Student Senate’s resolutions tasks.

"That should be the production of a Senate self-assessment document. We have to see how far they have come after this review, the Library system and the Senate system to continue to recognize legitimate reasons students need access to the Library system," Grosk said.

The Faculty Senate also passed a resolution recommending the creation of an honor code exec- utive board. Students who sit on the executive board will promulgate and review the honor code and look into the need for future resol- utions.

Weber said she and Schmidt established relationships with administrators, which follows the need for resol- utions this year.

"This year I spent the sum- mer here meeting with every administrator we could," she said. Weber said the committee was able to have meaningful discussions about existing relationships so the tool of the resolution is often not necessary anymore.

Grosk said Senate committee members were able to accomplish many goals without resolutions for this reason.

"We could sit down with all these people and talk instead of having to vote on these issues officially," he said. "Every project that you’ll see and every committee has pretty much been done without resolutions because they’ve been able to sit down with these administra- tors."

Senate also passed two resolutions. The first resolution honored late lacrosse coach Rick O’Leary and the second clari- fied the Senate’s role in allocating funds to cam- pus groups.

Prior to their last meeting of the semester, Senate passed two resolutions.

A resolution was passed thanking Notre Dame security for their increased willingness to allow students onto campus and asking them to continue to recognize legiti- mate reasons students need access to the Library system.

The Faculty Senate as a whole engaged in productive discussions about issues that are important to the student body, and were able to gain a feeling for the student body without resolutions this year. This makes their work invisible to the student body.

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The Faculty Senate plans to address the issue of parking by having a special task force to look into the problem and to find a solution. The Faculty Senate is also interested in looking at the possibility of adding more parking areas for students.

"Mainly the concern is that there seems to be a gap in perception between what students want and what the University feels is acceptable," he said.

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Leaders focus on off-campus safety, collaboration

Schmidt, Weber aim to increase communication, improve relationship between administration and student body

By ANN-MARIE WOODS
In Focus Writer

The Council of Representatives (COR), an advisory group that represents the student body, has continued to focus on improving communication between the student body and the University Board of Trustees, University administration and student government members. The Council of Representatives has examined topics of interest and importance to the student body, such as the Notre Dame Literary Festival, RentND, and the Off-Campus Evaluation Web site, known as COR.

Concerns regarding off-campus safety, living and transportation have been priorities for the current administration because of their imperative nature, and COR has facilitated the development and implementation of specific initiatives to address these community affairs. In preparation for the first meeting of the year with the University Board of Trustees, Schmidt utilized COR to decide on and develop a topic of relevance to the student body to be addressed with student affairs committee of the board.

Schmidt and COR members agreed that off-campus safety was the most important student concern, and recommended that it is the role of the University to protect and keep students safe off campus. COR members were instrumental in the various stages of planning for the Transpo initiative.

In addition, the Off-Campus Evaluation Web site, known as RentND, and the Off-Campus Incident Report Web site are COR's overall goal to incorporate new ideas into traditional events. “We've moved away from bombarding students with e-mails,” she said.

By LAURA MC CRYSTAL
In Focus Writer

Group revitalizes old traditions, changes advertising methods

The Student Union Board (SUB) set out to improve and increase the popularity of traditional campus events this year, SUB manager Kat Burke said. “This year we have continually pushed the envelope and challenged our events to go bigger.” SUB carried out its plan by increasing its communication, such as through a commercial the SUB has created, and through social media platforms like Twitter.

This exemplifies the importance of Burke's initiative to COR as a channel for conversation and advising, as COR serves as an intermediary between not only the student body and student government but also between the student body and the University.

The Notre Dame Literary Festival has existed for more than 40 years, but this year was the first time that it took place over the course of three days in true festival style, Burke said. “Last year it was very limited attendance, but this year the attendance was just amazing,” Burke said. “I think that's the approach that we're taking,” she said. “I think a lot of that is trying to tap into what students want.”

Burke said the most exciting new event this fall was a visit from an actor and director of “Booedocks Saints 2” as well as an extended showing of the film. The event was a free but ticketed event for students, and Burke said the line for tickets reached capacity 30 minutes before the box office opened.

“More than just the number and the audience, it’s the presence that Notre Dame students bring with them,” she said. “And that’s really what we strive for.”

Burke said SUB will host more events during the spring semester because football season is over. Last weekend, musician Joshua Radin came to Legends. Next semester's events will include a larger concert in Stepan Center, two comedy shows, the 52nd annual College Jazz Festival, the comedy group Second City and the spring Atonal festival.

SUB has also changed its method of advertising its events this year. Burke said, “We’ve moved away from bombarding students with e-mails,” she said. Instead, she said SUB has placed greater emphasis on its creative posters and other forms of communication, such as a commercial the group recently filmed with NDtv and giveaways to students such as water bottles and sunglasses.

Contact Laura Mc Crystal at lmccrystal@nd.edu

Grade: A-

SUB has made positive progress toward its goal to revitalize traditional events and increase student turnout as well as bring new events to campus that will generate enthusiasm among the student body.
The Campus Life Council, led by student body president Grant Schmidt and vice president Cynthia Weber, meets in a Nov. 16 meeting in LaFortune Student Center.

By LIZ O’DONNELL
In Focus Writer

The Campus Life Council (CLC) has made strides on several projects this semester, but failed to produce results tantamount to the success of last year’s administration. As the semester winds down, the Council divided into task forces that met on a bi-weekly (or sometimes weekly) basis to discuss an issue specific pertinent to campus life. This year, the Council had three task forces: Student Disciplinary Records, Student Legal Services and Alumni-Student Relations.

This semester, the Council passed and resolved tasks to the process of discussing the second and has not yet introduced the third. While the members of the Council should be credited for this progress, they faced a number of roadblocks along the semester that set back their success.

The Task Force on Alumni-Student Relations was the only committee able to pass a resolution this semester, a surprise because the task force was only created toward the end of last year.

The resolution, which CLC members passed at Monday’s meeting, is a proposal to add a member of the Alumni Association to sit as a member on the Council. However, some of the Council members questioned whether it is a good idea to extend voting privileges to the new member.

Student body president Grant Schmidt said the inclusion of a member of the Alumni Association will be beneficial for students because they will have alumni opinions on certain issues. Originally, the task force was assigned to investigate communication (in terms of advertising) on campus. They chose to delay the topic, however, until after the new agenda Web site debuts next semester.

The Task Force on Student Legal Services undertook a project more in depth than the other two committees when they looked into creating a system students could use for legal aid.

Chairman John Delacio and the rest of the task force proposed an online database that would carry names of area attorneys approved by the university. The database would offer a resolution to the larger council that would seek approval from the Office of Student Affairs to continue on with the database. While it is still in discussion, it appears it will be passed within the first few weeks of the spring semester.

The Task Force on Student Disciplinary Records, chaired by student body vice president Cynthia Weber had to change the direction of the task force half-way through the semester in order to make their end result more feasible. Initially the task force investigated the removal of a “minor infraction” from a person’s disciplinary record if it was a student’s sole offense and if it was committed during the student’s freshman year.

Investigating this topic, however, the group ran into several problems, which resulted in their decision to switch to issues pertaining to the handling of situations by outside agencies. As it stands currently, the task force is looking to create a procedure where Residence Life staff would notify a student’s rector of the situation and ask if the rector would like to handle the situation in dorm rather than have it sent straight to the Office of Residence Life and Housing, as the policy stands now.

While the committee hasn’t produced a resolution yet, their aim is in focus and Weber said the task force has a draft. They hope to produce a resolution at the beginning of next semester.

Contact Liz O’Donnell at codonnel@nd.edu

FMB approves funds for new Transpo route

The Financial Management Board (FMB) has approved the allocation of $20,000 in student funds to students and the distribution of funds for The Shirt, CCC has $20,000 in total, Student Union Treasurer Nick Danna said.

Danna said in early September, FMB approved the redistribution of funds to pay for the new late night Transpo shuttle.

“We must approve any changes in the use of money allocated to student groups,” he said.

Student groups looking to spend more than $5,000 for an event must seek approval through FMB, Danna said. The Financial Management Board, he explained, has a larger campus community, especially compared to undergraduate students.

- Laura McCrystal

Graduate Student plans Christmas party

The Graduate Student Union (GSU) organizes numerous fundraising events this fall to provide social interaction and professional development for the graduate student community, GSU president Andrew Bramsen said.

“We see ourselves as providing conduit service to the grad students,” he said.

This fall, the GSU co-sponsored a Halloween party with a student group at the Last School, Bramsen said.

In December, the GSU will host a family Christmas party as well as other events. They plan to invite graduate students about balancing faith, family and academia, he said.

Bramsen said the group plans an event during Homecoming for the GSU to attract students to its various programs. He said graduate students tend to be involved in their own department and the GSU provides a larger campus community, especially compared to undergraduate students.

- Laura McCrystal

Hall Presidents’ Council promotes pep rallies

Hall Presidents Council (HPC) helped plan the only pep rally this year, in Stepan Center before this season’s football game at Michigan and continued its normal duty of advising and overseeing dorm events and the presidents of each dorm, HPC chair Brendan McQueeny said.

Members of HPC, met with student body president Grant Schmidt and vice president Cynthia Weber to plan the Sept. 10 Student Pep rally, McQueeny said. The hall presidents advertised the pep rally through their dorms, he said.

When pep rallies were held in the JACK in previous years, HPC helped plan the events, but was not involved in the planning of events before the official pep rally this fall, McQueeny said. When the pep rallies moved to Irish Green this year, HPC played less of a role, but they did plan the all-student pep rally.

McQueeny said HPC also oversees and allocates funds for dorms’ signature events.

“We’re an oversight for the hall presidents and the guiding force behind them,” he said of HPC’s role.

“Out of most of these is kind of like a sounding board.”

- Laura McCrystal
SAINT MARY’S STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

Hoffman, Griffin bring transparency to administration

By ASHLEY CHARNLEY
In Focus Writer

Jenny Hoffman, student body president, and Meg Griffin, student body vice president, set the goal of transparency in the beginning of their term back in April 2009.

Their predecessors and their tumultuous term left students feeling uneasy toward their elected peers, but Hoffman and Griffin have been successful in regaining their constituents’ faith.

The duo has succeeded in implementing some of their specific goals, like adding printers to the Student Center and residence halls and extending campus facilities’ operating hours, but their continued and focused efforts are geared toward making their offices more accessible and reconnecting to the student body. Though there is still a long way to go, their progress is respectable.

The Saint Mary’s student body is limited in offering feedback, and Hoffman and Griffin need to work to get their constituents involved in Student Government Association (SGA) events.

The pair has planned several events — a major priority of their administration — but Griffin said they want to be more than an “event planning service” on campus and they hope to listen to the desires of the student body.

Griffin said they have tried to stay focused on the wants of the students and look at their requests frequently, one of their campaign promises. The SGA and the administration have trouble communicating and the administration is not ignoring the problem.

Students asked for more off-campus events, so Hoffman and Griffin reinstated the Navy Dance and the SGA also went on a trip to Wabash College earlier in the semester. Both of which, Hoffman said, were a great success.

The two have also started a Facebook page for SGA to provide an open forum for students.

“Most of the work Hoffman and Griffin have put into is very much behind the scenes,” said one student. “They are very approachable and have answered student demands in one some form since they took office in April. They deserve credit for how successfully and efficiently they have improved the image of student government while still in the middle of their term.”

SGA works to fix problems of past boards, move toward change

By NIKKI TAYLOR
In Focus Writer

Saint Mary’s Student Government Association (SGA) has set a lofty goal for themselves this year and thus far they have been working hard to achieve these aims and check them off the to-do list.

This year’s SGA board is implementing numerous changes in order to fix some of the problems that past boards had come under scrutiny for. SGA is trying to make their operations transparent and fair across the board.

In the first half of their year of change, SGA has put a strong focus on the group being more open with the student body. They want the students to be able to see the progress that SGA does for them. SGA is striving to have a stronger presence on campus to help earn the trust of students.

Efforts being made to enhance this include making more publicity for SGA sponsored events (like the little table tents in the dining hall), a student government Facebook page and SGA members wearing SGA apparel to advertise who the board members are.

At the beginning of the year, SGA wrote out a list of 32 issues that were on their to-do list, they will need to accomplish everything on their to-do list, they will need to accomplish every goal on their to-do list by the end of the year. The first time the list was looked at four out of those 32 goals were checked off and one goal on the list, better communication with the College’s administration is not ignoring the problem.

This number looks small, but SGA had their hands full this semester passing their budget, sending out and listening to appeals for allotments and making changes to sponsorship guidelines.

This year SGA has passed two resolutions, one about the use of the French cross and another on Saint Mary’s IT department supporting student government computers. Student body president Jenny Hoffman and vice president Meg Griffin researched Saint Mary’s peer institutions’ IT departments before contacting the College’s about supporting SGA computers.

In the fall SGA has also planned successful all-campus events, like the Navy Ball, the College’s annual dance, and the SGA also went on a trip to Wabash College, and the Navy Ball.

The organization has also discussed making the student center a more attractive place to study, and while many ideas were thrown around, nothing seems to have been decided or moved upon.

SGA did research health care on campus and discovered the process of getting another gynecologist on campus, but found the logistics for such a process too much for them to handle.

The system to distribute money for club sponsorships also underwent changes this year as result of SGA’s work. SGA changed the name of the process from co-sponsorships to sponsorships because SGA usually ends up paying more than the club itself. They have also put in place strict regulations as to how the process should be run, and clubs will be denied funding if they do not follow the procedure.

The board is being particularly hard to force people to respond to the issue of requests funding with documentation of costs before they are purchased to avoid reimbursements in an effort to better utilize student resources. Clubs are also required to show receipts after purchase for the club’s sponsors to certain club sponsorships in order for SGA to ensure correct spending.

In the second half of the semester, once sponsorship requests began coming in, SGA became distracted with sponsorships while other issues on their agenda seemed to have been on the back burner. However, the board is committed to ironing out all the kinks in the new program this year in order to leave a stronger legacy behind.

Overall, Hoffman and Griffin have made positive changes to student government.

In the next semester, SGA will continue to review sponsorships for clubs. In the spring, they hope to have completed an SGA handbook that will go out to all of the student body. SGA will outline new sponsorship guidelines, allotments and will also direct clubs to various campus offices, which should be used as resources.

All things considered, SGA is off to a great start this semester. If the group wants to accomplish everything on their to-do list, they will need to devote time and hard work in the spring to their priorities. Of their work this semester, they hope to be more in contact with the student body and have been successful and are appreciated.

SGA is working hard to better serve the student body and the changes they made will certainly help, but there is still always more to be done.

Contact Nikki Taylor at ntaylor01@saintmarys.edu

Student body president Jenny Hoffman, left, and student body vice president Meg Griffin have made positive changes to student government.

Contact Ashley Charnley at acharn01@saintmarys.edu

The Observer • IN FOCUS  page 7
By ALICIA SMITH
In Focus Weekly

Saint Mary's Student Diversity Board has been working hard this semester with a number of interesting activities and initiatives.

The Health and Wellness and Service committees successfully hosted an “No Workout Night,” fitness class styled after aerobics classes of the 1980s and encouraged participants to dress accordingly. Also organized a Habitat for Humanity service project and a Santa Breakfast at the Center for Homeless with the help of Office of Civil and Social Engagement (OCSE), RHA president Kristen Dalessandro said.

Each hall council has been extremely active, Dalessandro said. So far this year, all the hall councils have hosted successful events in their halls including, with Doctor Money, Hall Mass, Notre Dame game watches, mani-pedi parties, and candy dart scavenging," she said.

The upcoming semester, RHA has begun planning for the annual Little Sibs Weekend on April 10 and the All-School Formal on Feb. 27. Other than that, RHA is in the process of revising the College’s Constitution. The revised constitution will be in place for next year’s board. Dalessandro said she is positive this year’s RHA is fulfilling its duty to Saint Mary’s students.

"Our reason for existing is basically to bring a little happiness to the lives of students," Dalessandro said.  - Megan Loney

Residence Hall Association plans events

The Residence Hall Association (RHA) has been busy this semester with a number of interesting activities and initiatives.

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