Women fill upper tiers of government


By KAITLYNN RIELY
In Focus Weekly

The election last spring of Liz Brown and Maris Braun marked the first time the Notre Dame student government presidency and vice presidency have been filled by women. The University community and especially female alumnae celebrated the historic election, a moment they suggested showed how far the University has come since becoming coeducational in 1972.

Brown said she was aware there was "a lot of hoopla or hype" when they were elected.

"Liz and I stressed from the beginning that we hoped our genders was the least interesting thing about us," she said.

They said they wanted their peers and the administrators and faculty at Notre Dame to focus on their capabilities as leaders rather than their gender. Brown said they were initially greeted with comments about the historic note. Since taking office, however, she said they were selected based on their leadership, without consideration to their gender.

"The Notre Dame they experienced was that women weren't the majority, and having a female president and vice president was unheard of, so that feedback is still overwhelmingly positive," Braun said.

Since Brown and Braun assumed office last April, they have selected many women to the top-tier positions of student government. Sheena Planosonti became their chief executive assistant, the No. 3 position under Brown and Braun. Michelle Zaldana and Kadeja Gaines serve as secretary and treasurer, respectively.

Carol Hendrickson, Brenna Doyle, Ninny Wan, Mariana Montes, Karen Koski and Callie Montes, respectively.

"They are seeing what this gender continues to come from the University's female alumnae," Brown and Braun said. The fact that two women are the representatives of the student body means less for current students than it does for women who were at Notre Dame shortly after it became co-educational, Brown said. For them, the fact that two women are at the helm is a huge accomplishment.

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Leaders respond promptly to student issues

Brown, Braun win broad confidence by smoothly handling unexpected problems, like party permit ordinance

By KATLYNN RILEY
In Focus Writer

From the time they took office April 1, Liz Brown and Maris Braun have worked to fulfill the requirements of their positions by representing undergraduate student interests, responding to student opinions and maintaining regular communication with the student body.

Brown and Braun came into office under unusual circumstances when the candidates ran unopposed in the run-off election last year received the required 50 percent plus one of the votes needed to win, so the decision about who would lead the student body was made in a closed meeting of the Student Senate.

Brown and Braun emerged victorious, but without the strong backing of a majority of students. They did not let this deter them.

Since it was such a close election, that's motivating me," Brown said in April. "We have to step up on our game and prove that the right decision was made in the end."

The test

In August, Brown and Braun entered a world where they would have to prove they could handle their positions.

While most students were still immersed in summer jobs and internships, the pair took action on an issue of undeniable relevance to their constituents: an ordinance proposed before the South Bend Common Council that would require residents of boarding houses to call the city police to shut down an event at which more than 25 people would have access to alcohol.

The ordinance defined a boarding house as a building in a residentially zoned area in which more than two non-related people lived. Its requirements would thus affect the many upperclassmen living off campus as well as any students who wished to open their residences.

The student body president and vice president responded by writing an open letter to all students Aug. 4 to notify them of the proposed ordinance and state their intention to fight it.

Student response to the ordinance flared on Facebook and the student government blog, as students began their return to campus, the issue dominated campus discussions and the editorial pages of The Observer.

Brown and Braun could have let themselves be cast by the Council and local press as angry students defending their right to party without concern for neighbors.

Instead, the pair displayed prowess in handling unexpected events, taking meetings with Council members, listening intently to all sides of the issue. Their goal was to remove the permit process from the ordinance and seek other ways to address concerns about disorderly parties.

Changes were made in a closed meeting of the Student Senate.

The passage of the revised ordinance was a major success for Brown and Braun. The clarity they showed during the ordinance debates has been characteristic of their approach to behavior. On Sept. 24, they passed a revised ordinance that did not enact a permit process, though it included language for possible future implementation.

"A lot of how I would rate Liz's and my success is how we've responded to unforeseen events," she said. "We've been able to think on our feet, and I think that's helped us a lot out, as things have arisen that were not planned for."

Moving on

It would have been easy for Brown and Braun to become complacent after the successful outcome of the ordinance battle.

But Brown and Braun have not slowed in their attentiveness to student concerns. Through their own initiative and with collaboration from Student Senate committee chairs, they tackled the downsizing of student ticket sales and the bump in the price of course packets.

Brown said they made progress on both, and Brown and Braun said they are confident changes to the exchange program and the course packet distribution and pricing system will be implemented.

Brown said it appears the student ticket exchange program will be open to more games than this year, when students were only allowed to exchange tickets for the Notre Dame-GSU game.

Students who live on campus have the opportunity to purchase up to five guest meals, for five dollars each, per semester.

Their chief executive assistant, Sheena Flannamott, oversaw the launch of the new student government Web site, a much needed change for the organization.

Brown and Braun owe a great amount of credit to their Senate committee chairs for advancing the goals of the Braun-Brown administration, as well as for generating their own initiatives.

As Brown and Braun enter their final months in office, they must ensure their success with the ordinance is not the only defining moment of their administration.

Brown said she and Braun don't expect their efforts to taper off in the spring — though, she said, those efforts may lack the dramatic tone of past achievements.

"I think we still have a lot of work to be done," Brown said. "I think my concern are that we'll run out of time. I don't really see that happening, since we've put a lot of work this semester. Maybe our successes won't be as blatant next semester as they were this semester, but we are still pursuing good initiatives. There's a lot left to do."

Brown and Braun said they will continue to address community relations concerns in the spring. They are working with the Campus Life Council to prepare a report on the future of community relations for Father Mark Poorman, vice president for student affairs. They are also working with the Guest Meal Exchange office on a good neighbor guide for students who move off campus.

"We are still involved in the student government and will follow up on this fall's Notre Dame Forum on immigration through events led by the Senate Social Concerns and University Affairs committee. Braun said she is excited about the emergence of student group GreerND and plans to support its objective to make Notre Dame a more environmentally friendly campus.

Senate committees are working on numerous other initiatives, many of which seem likely to come to fruition before the Braun-Brown administration ends in March.

Should any urgent issues emerge during their final months in office, Brown and Braun's record suggests they will address it with speed and confidence. If they can bring that same drive to mundane matters of governance, they will conclude a successful run as student body president and vice president.

Campaign promises in review

- Delivered
  - Fraudulent student debate series
  - ND Forum follow up
  - Donor Dollars in the Stadium and the JAC
  - Guest Meal Exchange program
  - Sexual Assault Awareness Week
  - Darfur social action campaign letter to the University

- Pending
  - Taste of South Bend
  - Community based curriculum
  - South Bend airport shuttle

- Unsuccessful
  - Martin Luther King Jr. Day as University holiday
  - Standardize academic advising

Contact Kaitlynn Riley at kriely@nd.edu

Grade: A

Brown and Braun have tackled the issues that have arisen this year with alacrity. The party permit ordinance was an obstacle they could not have predicted when they took office, but they took it in stride and won the confidence of the student body through their negotiations with the South Bend Common Council. Their challenge now is to maintain their momentum into the spring semester.
Faculty Senate members discuss Catholic recruitment, Academic Articles

By MARCELA BERRIOS
In Focus Weekly

This year, the Faculty Senate has acted as a true liaison between professors and administrators. It has engaged promi-
nently in discussions of Academic Articles and considering University efforts to recruit Catholics and non-Catholics, who will affect both faculty and the University for years to come.

The senators began the year proposing legislation to change Notre Dame’s Academic Articles, which are “like a hose contract between the faculty and the administration,” said Senate Chair Colin Jessop, a physics professor.

The Articles outline the University’s standards for the appointment and promotion of faculty members, inclusion of a local vote by faculty members, and the faculty’s right to vote. The Academic Council reviews and considers amending the Articles. When the Academic Council recommended a change to the Faculty Senate, the senators started talking to their constituents about the proposal.

The Senate proposed several revisions to the Council, which will deliver its findings to a joint meeting of the Senate’s proposals. The Council will deliver its findings to an Academic Senate, but the University must give before dis-
missing a faculty member.

The Senate has also reacted to University plans to increase recruitment of Catholic professors.

At the semester’s final Faculty Senate meeting Nov. 7, faculty members were presented with an initiative of faculty members, and none are included as full members of the committee.

Academic Senate: A

Social Concerns: B

Residence Life: C

Multicultural Affairs: C+

Academic Affairs: A

Social Concerns: B

Residence Life: C
COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES

Members weigh in on ticket exchanges, voter turnout

Brown's advisory board discusses endorsing pro-immigrant U.S. Senate bill, apathy in student government elections

Grade: A

The Council of Representatives is an advisory body, not a legislative body; therefore, it did not produce many tangible results this semester. However, many council members showed a willingness to think creatively in working with the ticket office and to stand up to their administration in its attempt to support the DREAM Act. COR members took advantage of their platform to get their opinions heard by Brown and Braun.

Grade: B-

Home games, scheduling issues thwart lectures, concert plans

Top, members of the Council of Representatives raise their hands to vote at a meeting on Oct. 2. Bottom, chief executive assistant Sheena Plamteiott, left, student body president Liz Brown, center, and vice president Maris Braun preside over a Nov. 13 meeting.

The Council cited a lack of awareness of voting procedures as a possible cause for low voter turnout in previous years but failed to consider the possibility that the minimal student participation in the elections may be attributed to the students' lack of faith in the elected officials' efficiency in improving student life.

BY JOHN TIERNEY
In Focus Writer

Members of the Council of Representatives (COR), an advisory body, have been, howev­ er, more hesitant to agree on how to distribute ticket exchanges. They have been, howev­ er, more hesitant to agree on how to distribute ticket exchanges.

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BY JOHN TIERNEY
In Focus Writer

Scheduling conflicts kept the Student Union Board (SUB) from bringing big-name musicians and speakers to campus this fall. SUB manager Phil Ross said SUB is charged with providing the university with cultural programming. Ross, a senior English major who is having a slow year with few guest speakers, few small-to-medium-sized shows and no large concerts.

With only six non-football week­ ends to work with before December, Ross said SUB was unable to book a major musical act to present on any of the open­ nights.

Last year, SUB brought singer Ben Folds to campus for a sold-out concert at Stepan in November. This year, football schedule con­ siderations forced SUB to focus on smaller events in smaller ven­ ures, like the Dec. 3 presentation of band The Format at Legends. Ross said about 750 people packed Legends' small theater for the concert.

Legends was also the site of another SUB hit this semester, a show by comedian Ben Bailey on Oct. 12. The Council again talked about The Shirt in November when it had to approve Jason Gott as the new president of The Shirt Project — seem­ off­ touch and unanswered.

Another football-related item that was discussed is the COR agenda this semester is The Shirt.

The Shirt Solidarity Day, origi­

inally scheduled for Sept. 20, became the center of a small controversy after Brown and Braun sent out an e­mail to the stu­ dent body encouraging students to wear the green T­shirt in sup­ port of the football team. After many people told them their request conflicted with a previously scheduled national solidarity day with the "Jena, 6," Brown and Braun sent out a second e­mail encouraging stu­ dents to wear black instead in support of the African­American teenagers in the middle of a racially charged trial.

Brown and Braun said they were aware of the trial but not that Sept. 20 was designated as a Jena 6 sol­ idarity day. "It was not the intention of 5 t u d e n t 4 n Government to plan a day in support of ND Football on the same day as a national move­ ment to support Jena, 6," the second e­mail said.

While the oversight was corrected, and The Shirt Solidarity Day was rescheduled for the following day, the error made Brown, her advisors and Brad LeNoir — president of The Shirt Project — seem­ off­ touch and unanswered.

During its most recent meet­ ing, COR members discussed a campaign to increase voter turnout at the next student body elections. Ross, a senior English major who is having a slow year with few guest speakers, few small-to-medium-sized shows and no large concerts.

With an election year around the bend, Ross said SUB does not have other fun things on weeknights so you really need to pub­ licate them well. And that's something we'll be working on next semester.

Contact Marcela Berrios at aberrios@nd.edu

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Contact Marcela Berrios at aberrios@nd.edu
In brief, meetings, members ponder green summits, Honor Code

By JENN METZ

The Campus Life Council (CLC), composed of three task forces, laid out specific goals for the year, but as the semester comes to a close, the group has yet to pass a resolution.

Though task force leaders claim to be making progress in their individual meetings, so far the Council’s biweekly meetings have lasted, on average, just 15 minutes, due in part to the attenuation of an hour-long presentation by University Architect Doug Marsh. Results of the task force meetings have yet to be seen.

Chief executive assistant Sheena Plamotio, who heads the Task Force on Campus Environment, has proposed a series of three green summits to raise awareness of environmental issues on campus.

Though the summits have the potential to be very successful, lack of publicity and coordination of schedules with other crucial aides have rendered them somewhat ineffectual.

One of the group’s only successes so far this year has been the development of a database, approved by the Office of the University Architect’s treasurers for expansion. The database, which cur- rently scheduled to take place on Jan. 21, should be reissued to any interested officer. Hopefully, Plamotio will be able to focus on other task forces, like the large amount of food wasted in the din­ ning hall and campus energy effici­ ency.

Student body vice president Mari Braun leads the Task Force on Student Development. Three of the group’s outlined goals include the creation of an Honor Code awareness week, exploring problems of student gambling and fostering better gender rela­ tions during Freshman Orientation activities.

The task force is capable of addressing some of these issues. However, after spending the majority of the semester present­ ing on the Honor Code initiative, Braun announced she would be passing it off to the University Code of Honor Committee because she believed its goals fell under the responsibilities of the Office of the Provost.

Braun said her task force need to start producing results. Resolutions on their initiatives could have potential, but so far, no progress has been seen. If the Council hopes to make an impact on gender relations for next year’s Freshman Orientation, the task force must start taking real action to pursue its goal.

The third CLC task force, the Task Force on Community Relations, works in contact with the Student Senate committee of the same name. Headed by Student senator Gus Gari, the task force has been pursuing the creation of a Notre Dame version of the Good Neighbor Guide, a University of Virginia pamphlet that outlines the difference between students and the greater community.

For the last several meetings, Gari has been unable to get the momentum the task force has been making progress on the pamphlet, but at the end of the semester, the contents have just been finalized and production has not started.

The Community Relations task force is also looking to improve transportation to and from campus. If tangible plans had been formed this semester, at least experimental changes could have been implemented to improve transportation during the next semester. However, like the rest of the Council, the task force has spent most of its time in talk.

Gari has done a commendable job conducting research on peer university policies regarding campus relations with the greater community, but the task force needs to step it up next semester. CMC leaders offer a unique perspective on student life with its mix of students, rectors and staff. But the Council is at the same place it was last year at this time — no resolutions have been passed and matters have been deferred to other committees. The task force needs to stop talking and start doing.

Student body president Liz Brown needs to use the meetings more than as just a forum for what the CLC can accomplish in addition to its already-outlined objectives. Excluding the meeting with the architecture, the bi­ weekly meetings have added up to about an hour and a half of worth­while task force presentations, and the Council has failed to dis­ cuss any new business.

She recently called for task force leaders to make recommenda­ tions to the Office of Student Affairs, which could have some impact on student life.

Contact Jenn Metz at jmetz@nd.edu

Financial Management Board allocates funds

The Financial Management Board (FMB) is a student-operated oversight committee responsible for monetary distribution to var­ ious University organizations. The board oversees The Shirt Project, approving all parts of the design and manufacturing phases and ensuring profitability.

The board also organizes The Shirt Charity Fund, which is financed by half the revenue generated from The Shirt’s annual sales and is available to Notre Dame students who need to pay college expenses. The board has recently completed its annual spending review through which it holds accountable all organizations receiving funds. Additional funds needed by organ­ izations were allocated at this time.

In April, the board will review budgets for all major student organizations, including the CCC, for the 2008-09 school year.

Kadeja Gaines, the Student Treasurer and head of the Financial Management Board, said clubs and organizations have been spending responsibly this year.

Robbins said new clubs are created to fulfill unmet needs and interests. Last year, the Social Sciences Council, which was formed. New organizations are carefully monitored during the probationary states for a year.

The CCC’s future goals include gaining more control over the board’s financial process, with online forms and databases and making students more aware of the CCC’s services.

"It’s a constant goal to try to keep the clubs informed that we’re a re­ source for them," Robbins said.

Hall Presidents’ Council promotes pep rallies

Despite a 3-9 football season, Hall Presidents’ Council president Lauren Sharkey and Andy Hellmann still have plans for dorms’ turnout at pep rallies and student involvement in dorm activities.

Sharkey said the success of pep rallies was partially due to enthusi­ asm from dorms.

“We tried to keep the crowds together, so there was rivalry between the pep rallies,” Sharkey said.

In addition to hosting pep rallies, the HPV, allows hall presidents to exchange dorm information, and the council allocates money to dorms’ signature events.

Sharkley observed more involvement this year, such as the Knott Rodeo and various speakers. "What we look forward to is more and more dorms getting their events that aren’t usual," she said.

Hellmann said in the future he hopes to see more multi-dorm events, such as Dillon and Alumni rivalry week. He said although brothers-sister dorms foster inter­ dorm activity, there is little collabora­ tion among dorms of the same sex.

what we need to get ourselves organized so that we can get our names out there," Clitheroe said.

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Claire Reising
Hodges, Payne emphasize communication

By KATIE KOHLER
In Focus Writer

When Kim Hodges and Kelly Payne assumed their roles as student body president and vice president, they began the term with a focus on improved communication between students, administrators, and alumnae. In the first six weeks, the duo has accomplished all of its campaign promises to some degree.

"In one sense or another, we already accomplished everything in our platform," she said. "We are lucky our boards are so impressive and creative. From the first years to the senior, they give us so much to work with."

Hodges and Payne built from past experience with the Student Diversity Board. Hodges, the first black student body president in College history and former vice president of the Board of Governance, said she has worked throughout her presidency to address the importance to the overall student body while continuing to foster awareness of diversity issues.

"I knew taking this position as student body president that my spectrum can't be so narrow," she said. "I looked at the well-being of the Board on campus and broadened my spectrum." When running to bring to campus a greater variety of groups, people and events to increase student awareness of issues beyond Saint Mary's.

"I went in with a diversity of thought behind how I present my skills and leadership abilities on campus," she said. "We need to focus outside the Student Diversity Board on a much larger scale." Hodges and Payne won the election by only 37 votes. They said the narrow margin of victory has increased their labors for the term. "When you lose, you have to have high expectations anyway," Payne said. "One vote or 100 votes, we know what we had to do this year." Hodges also recognized the importance of their executive support system.

"Now that we were able to touch on each of our campaign issues, we can dig even deeper next semester," she said. Hodges also recognized the development of new h i p among their board members, the need for their board members to touch on each of our campaign issues, we can dig even deeper next semester," she said.

Promises delivered

Hodges and Payne succeeded by including the talent of election opponents in their administration. After seniors Annie Davis and Courtney Kennedy were the first to publicly endorsed the Hodges-Payne ticket for the student body presidency, Hodges welcomed Davis and Kennedy as executives on the Board of Governance.

"Having Annie [Davis] and Courtney [Kennedy] on our board brings a lot of diversity," Hodges said. "They are helping us use our unified goals." Hodges and Kennedy also brought to the administration experience in College-wide government, as each had the Board of Governance role of BOG on campus and among their important groups on campus.

"It's everything about connecting important groups on campus," Payne said.

The pair ran on a campaign that included increasing diversity and improving communications between students, administrators and alumnae. While several events were well attended, others had a low student attendance. While the board seems willing to work with students to allow them to express their ideas and opinions about the campus, the board has already accomplished everything in their campaign promises.

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"They don't want to hear students' opinions," Hodges said. "I looked at the well-being of the Board on campus and broadened my spectrum." When running to bring to campus a greater variety of groups, people and events to increase student awareness of issues beyond Saint Mary's.

"I went in with a diversity of thought behind how I present my skills and leadership abilities on campus," she said. "We need to focus outside the Student Diversity Board on a much larger scale." Hodges and Payne won the election by only 37 votes. They said the narrow margin of victory has increased their labors for the term. "When you lose, you have to have high expectations anyway," Payne said. "One vote or 100 votes, we know what we had to do this year." Hodges also recognized the importance of their executive support system.

"Now that we were able to touch on each of our campaign issues, we can dig even deeper next semester," she said. Hodges also recognized the development of new h i p among their board members, the need for their board members to touch on each of our campaign issues, we can dig even deeper next semester," she said.

Promises delivered

Hodges and Payne succeeded by including the talent of election opponents in their administration. After seniors Annie Davis and Courtney Kennedy were the first to publicly endorsed the Hodges-Payne ticket for the student body presidency, Hodges welcomed Davis and Kennedy as executives on the Board of Governance.

"Having Annie [Davis] and Courtney [Kennedy] on our board brings a lot of diversity," Hodges said. "They are helping us use our unified goals." Hodges and Kennedy also brought to the administration experience in College-wide government, as each had the Board of Governance role of BOG on campus and among their important groups on campus.

"It's everything about connecting important groups on campus," Payne said.
**Student Diversity Board**

**Group raises awareness of disabilities, hunger**

Spring agenda includes first-ever women's appreciation week, student leadership conference on immigration, green issues

By MANDI STIRONE

The Student Diversity Board (SDB) has the ambitious purpose of facilitating understanding and respect in the Saint Mary's community. The board's efforts enhance the connection of the students with academic life at Saint Mary's. The group is chosen from the rising senior class. The board president is chosen from the rising senior class.

The group's events include a fall fundraiser that benefits Darfur, and the annual SDB bonfire in October. The group has also hosted another event to support Saint Mary's outraged. The board's events are planned to accommodate the student body back to school, and from every students to meet the deans of the student body.

The SDB is running a successful and well-attended awareness week, starting on March 15-17. The board is also planning another awareness week, which will be held for environmental justice, immigration, and women in business.

The SDB is bringing singer Colbie Caillat to campus to perform at the event.

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**By MANDI STIRONE**

**In Focus Writer**

The Residence Hall Association (RHA) has tried to create new programming this year to benefit the student body and improve residence life on campus. The RHA hosted activities like the "Go Belles" tailgate, an event to support Saint Mary's athletics and make people aware of the risks associated with alcohol use. They held Still Point week prior to the Duke gop rally, which Saint Mary's hosted. The group has many activities planned, including the Saint Mary's All School Formal and Little Sibs weekend.

The Saint Mary's Formal will be held at the Palais Royale in downtown South Bend in February. In March, Little Sibs weekend will bring siblings of Saint Mary's students to campus to take part in fun activities.

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**By MANDI STIRONE**

**In Focus Writer**

The Academic Council builds alumni network

The Academic Council (ASC) includes a student representative from each major of the college. The ASC's biggest project this year is the student ad hoc General Education Committee, which is working to revise the general education requirements at the College. In January, the board will attend one meeting in October. The board will attend one meeting in October.

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**By MANDI STIRONE**

**In Focus Writer**

The First-year Board has moved slowly this year. Its first event won't happen until Saturday when the freshmen representative hosts a study break in the Beanbrown Lounge in LeMars Hall from 2 to 4 p.m. President Emily Hoffman said.

Alice Snow, the first-year board member, has had one event this year. The board has not yet had any events.

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**By MANDI STIRONE**

**In Focus Writer**

The Sophomore Board has focused on fundraising to help children with cancer. The class raised money for the "Light the World" campaign, which funds patients earning the M.D. degree. The class also hopes to plan a fundraiser to support Darfur. The Sophomore Board president, Carrie Gerbert said.

One of her goals, said, is to plan events through an application process at the College. The board has been very well attended, and women in business, organizational, and community service opportunities are very important.

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**By MANDI STIRONE**

**In Focus Writer**

The Junior Board used the entire semester to plan its signature event, Junior Mom's Weekend, which will take place in March.

But class secretary Katie Putz said that the board has been busy, and they hope to plan a fundraiser to support Darfur. The board has been very well attended, and women in business, organizational, and community service opportunities are very important.

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**By MANDI STIRONE**

**In Focus Writer**

The Senior Board kicked off the year with the second annual "Let Your Sister Pick Your Minor" dance, presided over by Colleen Kielty. Another big event for the board this year was Senior Sister's Weekend, held in October.

The board is also planning a Saint Mary's signature event, "12 Days of Christmas" in December.

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