SIZING UP STUDENT GOVERNMENT

The Observer reviews elected offices at Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s

Photo Illustration by Suzanna Pratt and Brandon Kelean
‘We’re in full support’

Rocheleau, student government mark establishment of GLBTQ student organization

By JOHN CAMERON

While “Beloved Friends and Allies,” the plan for expanding services to Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (GLBTQ) students and establishing an official student organization, is a collaborative effort by the Office of the President, Student Affairs, and a number of consulted groups, student body president Brett Rocheleau said he considers the resolution to be his administration’s most important project thus far.

Rocheleau said he and his predecessors in student government have been pushing for this move forward for decades.

“We’ve advocated for this since 1986,” he said. “Pretty much every administration along the way has advocated for more inclusive [GLBTQ] environment in the Notre Dame community whether it be a variety of different causes but definitely a student organization was one of them.”

He said student government’s coordinated efforts in advocating for a student organization have spanned his two years in an executive position.

“The last two years, I know [student body president emeritus] Pat [McCormick] and I and [student body vice president] Katie Rose and I have made this a major issue on our platforms,” he said. “The effort was definitely reenergized by the [Progressive Student Alliance’s] 4 to 5 Movement, it got a lot more discussion on campus. ... You had students not involved in the process talking about it.”

Rocheleau’s initial role in the effort was a presentation to the University’s Board of Trustees last semester.

“Student government chose to present to the Board of Trustees about this issue back in May of 2012, and when we came back to campus we found out they’d done some extensive benchmarking effort,” he said.

Over the course of Vice President for Student Affairs Erin Hoffmann Harding’s review, Rocheleau said his office gave extensive input.

“They brought us in, current members of Core [Council for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Questioning Students], the petition holders for the [proposed] graduate students [GLBTQ] club, and [unofficial gay-straight alliance] AllianceND,” he said. “We had meetings with Student Affairs where we collaborated on various ideas on how we wanted this to work.”

While much of the effort came from the administration, AllianceND, the Core Council and other students, Rocheleau said his office was behind the movement at every step.

“Through the whole process we’ve been in contact with [Progressive Student Alliance co-president] Alex Coccia, when he would send any recommendations or different materials to student affairs, when it was Pat and I, we’d have our names on those,” he said.

Rocheleau said he was proud of the plan announced Wednesday by University administration.

“We’re in full support,” he said. “We think this is a great step forward for the University and we’re proud to be a part of the process.”

Now that the plan has been established, Rocheleau said his administration’s role will now be to help figure out some of the practical implementation of the organization.

“ ‘The next big step is sort of how to define it ... and how the organization can get its funding,’” he said. “ ‘Those are things our [Oversight Committee] is sort of working on. That’s going to be the second semester project, sort of answering to some of the more minor details.’

While the plan is in its early stages, Rocheleau is confident it will benefit the campus community.

“It’s been a great collaboration between all the parties coming to a middle ground. I think this will be an excellent student organization,” he said. “I’m interested to see how it happens in practice, I think it’s going to be positive. It won’t necessarily be around in our term but I think it has the potential to be extremely successful.”

This collaborative effort, Rocheleau said, is what made the plan possible.

“I’m thankful for all the help from all the different parties. No one could have done this alone,” he said. “Without everyone working together this couldn’t have been accomplished.”

Contact John Cameron at jcamero2@nd.edu
Steps, not strides

Rocheleau, Rose manage smooth student government operation, lay groundwork but lack innovative vision

By KRISTEN DURBIN
News Editor

In their 34-page campaign platform, “Advancing the Vision,” senior student body president Brett Rocheleau and senior vice president Katie Rose outlined their plans to “build upon the foundation that took a whole year to establish” during last year’s student government administration.

Last spring, the duo campaigned on both long-term, large-scale goals and less expansive initiatives to continue the student body leadership precedent set by Rocheleau and former student body president Pat McCormick.

While Rocheleau and Rose have done a commendable job of overseeing the smooth operation of University affairs, their administration has largely come from improvement of previously established department of constituent services and safety, Rocheleau and Rose have not fully implemented any new initiatives.

Constituent services

After the McCormick-Rocheleau administration overseeing the creation of the Department of Constituent Services, Rocheleau and Rose prioritized continued improvement of its mission to transform the department’s service to students in their platform.

In general, they and the department have made progress in this achieving goal through several avenues, including encouraging student feedback through recent University Facebook and Twitter accounts, collecting information from student surveys and communicating with hall governments on dorm-specific issues.

“One thing [Constituent Services] has done this year is formalizing that first platform initiative, so they’ve run things through the Facebook page like ‘On-Call Week,’” Rose said. “We’ve had a lot of really creative and new ideas come through in feedback, so I think it’s initiatives like that the department has really built up on.”

Rocheleau said he, Rose and senior chief-of-staff Katie Baker visited hall government meetings and hall governments to collect student feedback on issues pertaining to individual halls. A discussion of water quality problems in one such visit to Fisher Hall prompted the administration to push for installation of hydration stations in every dorm at the beginning of the fall semester.

“Going to hall governments has helped us out a lot by seeing what students want... by being able to communicate with the hall governments, we can hear a lot about students and the feedback they have,” Rocheleau said. “It helps us improve our constituent capacity on campus.”

Aside from these visits, the improvements in constituent services have largely come from the work of the department and its head, John A. Ferrante, Jr., to focus on-campus security issues such as campus lighting.

“(The University) is doing a review of lighting on campus to make sure the perception as students walk around campus at night is a feeling of safety and not a feeling of fear,” Rocheleau said.

In the wake of increased traffic safety concerns at crosswalks near campus and accidents at the intersection of Twyckenham Drive and Vanes Street, junior director of University affairs Michael Masi has “built fantastic relationships” with Notre Dame Student Police (NDSP) and was involved in conversations leading to the installation of a new traffic signal at that intersection, Rose said.

The Rocheleau-Rose administration continued previously established constituent safety initiatives by holding a “well-attended” second annual Safety Summit earlier this fall and maintaining frequent email communication with students about safety issues, Rocheleau said.

Despite the efforts of student government groups to improve safety through discussions and meetings with NDPSP and local police forces, Rocheleau and Rose have not fully implemented any new safety initiatives thus far in their term.

A promise to develop a mobile safety app through collaboration with NDPSP and the Department of Campus Technology has proven empty aside from brainwashing students. At the end of spring semester, though Rose said app development may be explored in the future.

Changing focus

After taking office, Rocheleau and Rose had to address the on-going issue of discrimination and patient concern of racial discrimination at Notre Dame as a result of the Call to Action movement and town hall meeting in March. During the first months of their term, the Call to Action committee, the Office of Student Affairs, dorm multicultural commissions and other campus organizations have worked to bring the University “up to the standard of embracing diversity” through more than 15 different initiatives, including an extensive internal diversity audit completed by Student Affairs, Rose said.

“It was a huge success,” Rose said. “This is something we’ve been talking about for a while and we’re finally able to see the results we’ve been hoping for.”

While the administration has made progress in increasing eco-friendliness on campus by installing hydration stations and eXtender hand dryers in buildings, student government did, however, play a role in the University’s plan for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning student resources, in keeping with Rocheleau and Rose’s goal of updating school policies.

Rocheleau and Rose have fall quite short in their goals for connecting Notre Dame with the global community, as Rocheleau said a previously proposed social justice concert event for Playing 4 Peace will not likely take place during his term. Progress has been made, however, on two new websites — serve.nd.edu and summeropp.nd.edu — that will connect students with opportunities to serve and study abroad.

In terms of modernizing Notre Dame, the administration’s tangible results have come in the areas of increasing eco-friendliness on campus by installing hydration stations and eXtender hand dryers in buildings. Student government did, however, play a role in the University’s plan for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning student resources, in keeping with Rocheleau and Rose’s goal of updating school policies.

Even if Rocheleau and Rose “check off” all the tasks outlined in their platform next semester, their work so far lacks any progress toward implementing a major new initiative that will leave a lasting legacy on the University.

Contact Kristen Durbin at kkdurbin@nd.edu

By CRISTEN DURBIN
News Editor

The administration’s work in responding to that question, “check off” all the tasks outlined in their 34-page campaign platform, promising to continue the work of that administration by “advancing this vision we all share and delivering measurable results.” However, tangible results have given way to prolonged discussion and limited action during the current administration, despite the significant collaboration Rocheleau and Rose have implemented through their efforts to coordinate the administration with the work of the President and Vice President, other student government departments and University entities.

Lacking an innovative vision of his own, Rocheleau has depended on the work of his predecessors to their credit, Rocheleau and Rose have adequately met the requirements of their positions in overseeing solid work and collaboration by student government as a whole. Without setting any signature initiatives off the ground, they have not gone beyond the minimum expectation of their work to leave a unique legacy on Notre Dame.
Student Senate increases efficiency since merge with COR

By MADDIE DALY

This year’s Student Senate has been more productive than past groups due to the dedication of the senators and the new format of meetings, student body presidente Kate Rose said.

“I’m really happy about our successes so far,” Rose said. “I couldn’t be happier with the engagement and enthusiasm of the Senate members and department heads.”

Last December, the Council of Representatives merged with the Student Senate to form one larger governing body. As far as the new format of meetings, Rose said the group is able to get more done and have more time for discussion.

“I’m very excited about the [merge between Senate and the Council of Representatives],” Rose said. “Last year, the representatives from all 29 dorms and off campus sat around the table while the directors of each department sat at the front. The agenda included updates from all ten department heads which took up a lot of our discussion time, often sitting there with blank stares.

“By having just one update a semester we have increased efficiency and are able to have thirty to forty more minutes of discussion per meeting.”

This year’s senators have appointed replacements on their predecessors, Rose said, because the merged setting allows them to actively engage with the group’s agenda.

“It’s exciting to see people engaged during the meetings, and the fact that we’ve passed 34 resolutions so far — more than previous senates have passed in entire years — is a testament to the senators themselves,” Rose said.

“The resolutions that warrant more discussion then others have pushed us to strengthen our arguments and keep everyone engaged and alert.

Although 34 is a large amount of resolutions to be passed in such a short amount of time, it is important to look at the quality in addition to quantity. Some of the resolutions are more trivial than others, accomplishing little more than creating titles for positions or approving thank you notes to be sent to various departments.

Custodians, in a more controversial resolutions sparked debate on the formation of a sub-committee of the gender relations department, while the Academic Affairs Committee discussed a resolution of a Gay-Straight Alliance. Senate members argued quite heatedly and needed intervention on Rose’s part to stay on topic and stay professional rather than getting too involved in personal opinions. The resolution ended up being passed on Sept. 12 despite the debate.

Another important resolution dealt with community relations and appeared before the senators after the Sept. 28 Community Summit meeting. The resolution stated the ideas brought forth at the debate would be put into action within the 2012-2013 academic school year in order to better the relationship between students at Notre Dame and members of the South Bend community. The resolution passed with no objections.

Previous senators have had problems with attendance and interest, but this year’s group has had a near-perfect record.

“Student Senate has held its discipline so far,” Rose said. “Sometimes enthusiasm wanes a little bit, attendance declines, things get busy — but this year is the first year we haven’t had to call senators asking where they are.

“We’ve had no attendance problems and always get emails from senators who can’t attend or who plan to send a proxy. I’m very proud by the amount of work everyone has put in.”

Looking ahead to next semester’s transition, Rose said she feels confident that her job will be passed into good hands.

“I love the fact that transitions happen in February and we are able to have department heads appointed by March,” Rose said.

“That way we can have plenty of talks with our predecessors to establish a good relationship. Transition month is crucial.”

As for the transition itself, Rose said the most difficult part will be acquainting new members with parliamentary procedure.

“It’s tough to get all the lingo down, and a lot of it has to be learned as you go,” Rose said.

“Before the first Senate meeting we have a senator training program where we go through a fake resolution to practice. I like parliamentary procedure because it makes sure everyone has an equal voice and ensures that the meetings run smoothly. It’s good because it keeps everything formal.”

Even though this year’s senators have been very successful in bettering the school, Rose said more important is the fact that they have grown as individuals and leaders.

“It’s fantastic if we can improve the school, but it’s an even better opportunity for people to work together and find new avenues where there’s a roadblock, learn how to divide up tasks,” Rose said.

“To hear people on senate talk about how they’ve become more engaged in the school and developed personally, that’s what makes me happy.”

Contact Maddie Daly at m Daly@nd.edu

The Department of Academic Affairs worked to reform several academic policies, and revised its own constitution.

Department director Maxwell Brown led the department as it coordinated the Last Lecture series, assisted in the library renovation process and implemented creating of davo and dace departments. The university is currently exploring the addition of others.

Academic Affairs also created an interactive study spaces map on InsideND and continued the College Readiness Program. Despite the department’s achievements, Academic Affairs earns a B+ because it failed to meet its own objective of listing these initiatives to the student body.

The Department of Campus Technology appointed technol ogy commissioners in each dorm to resolve students’ technical concerns more efficiently. Fostered the development of mobile technology through multiple events as a “Mobile Summit” and supported Academic Affairs’ initiative to create maps of campus study spaces. Department director Yiting Zheng led her department as they worked to replace campus access of Rhoads-Hennessy Hall, better the relationship on campus and support initiatives undertaken by the University Council for Academic Technologies. The department earns an A for its work this semester because the initiatives both thoroughly addressed the needs of the Notre Dame community and were efficiently implemented.

The Department of Community Relations hosted several large events for students, including a new student bus tour, a welcome picnic with the Robinson Community Learning Center and a community earlier this fall. Department director Kelsey Ekenridge guided her department through collaboration with the Co-Campus Council, which has allowed connections between area campuses and residents to multiply.

Community Relations also has planned a Comm/University Day for the spring and a student discount program, because the department has pursued a thin array of initiatives, it earns a B.

The Department of Constituent Services made its presence known on campus through visits to Hall Council meetings and a Facebook group called “Connecting to constituents.” Department director Lisa Manfred guided her team as they organized student feedback and suggestions to the appropriate departments, and has planned several initiatives for the spring including “Senate Speak/Notes” on an on-campus farmer’s market and a leftovers apparel sale.

The department earns an A because its initiatives are creative and varied, but it could still engage more deeply the student community.

The Department of Gender Issues pursued an extremely wide ar ray of initiatives, including revision of the discrepancies across the residence hall alarm system, improvement to Contemporary Topics, promotion of a Gay-Straight Alliance, assistance in the planning of Sexual Violence Awareness Week and revision of language in NDSP sexual assault policy. Department director Michael Masi led his department’s support for their initiatives already in place, and to work toward planning a more effective freshmen orientation. Gender Issues earns an A+ for the excellent variety of its initiatives and its success in seeing them put into place.

The Department of Residence Life installed hydration stations in Rolfs Sports Recreation Center, the Rockne Memorial Gymnasium and in the residence halls. Department director Peter Dwyer led his department as it installed hand dryers in the residence halls, worked to delete meal times in the dining halls and installed a sub-committee specifically promote diversity in housing. The department plans to also install high efficiency washing machines in the residence halls and further promote diversity in housing.

Residence Life earns an A-, because though it has effectively responded to diversity issues, it has focused too much on the installation of hydration stations and has neglected to pursue a variety of policy initiatives.

The Department of Social Concerns has fashioned a new “The Student’s Guide to the ND Community” website to make it easier for students to pursue service opportunities and has nearly completed a food nutrition booklet to aid South Bend residents using food stamps. Department director Paul D’Giovanni said an event on Sept. 17 taught students about Syrian conflict and refugee situation as a join effort with Acoustica. The department has planned a bloodbowl event, charities to benefit Hurricane Sandy victims, a documentary series and a charity run. Social Concerns earns an A for its efforts this semester, though though the department concentrated its efforts on a few initiatives, those initiatives have been extremely successful.

The Department of University Affairs worked to promote general safety around campus by conducting safety audits and a lecture on the use of mobile technology through multiple events as a “Mobile Summit” and supported Academic Affairs’ initiative to create maps of campus study spaces. Department director Michael Masi led his department as they reviewed the incoming HAWK system near Twycross Road, student ID cards, implemented hydration stations and continued the college readership program. Despite the department’s achievements, University Affairs earns a B+ for its effective initiatives, especially for those related to campus safety, however the scope of its initiatives is limited and too heavily focused on sustainability efforts.
SUB broadens appeal, prepares for spring events

Representatives seek to gather more student input, adjust plans to meet student needs next semester

By MEL FLANAGAN
News Writer

The Student Union Board (SUB) has focused the first semester of its term on gauging student interest in different types of events the board could host on campus.

Board manager Ashley Markowski said the board’s primary goal for the year was receiving input from a greater number of University students on SUB’s activities.

“We’ve been trying to send out more surveys through our dorm representatives to send out to their halls,” she said. “We want to know what artists do you know, what artists would you attend concerts for, things like that.”

Although the majority of SUB’s events will take place in the spring, Markowski said the organization has seen great success in some of their events they have held in the fall.

On Sept. 7, “Saturday Night Live” head writer Seth Meyers performed a comedy act that marked the largest event in SUB’s history. About 2,100 people attended the Friday night event in the Stepan Center, and another 3,000 watched on a screen outside the dome.

Markowski said other popular events included a lecture by Pat Brown, an award-winning author and criminal profiler, a Christmas sale and showings of popular summer blockbusters such as “The Avengers” and “21 Jump Street.”

“One of the things we’ve heard about Fall Mall is it’s so early that most people can’t come to it so they wanted a different sale later in the year,” she said. “It had Christmas lights, decorations, minis trees, any Christmas product that Bed, Bath & Beyond sells.”

SUB, the largest programming organization on campus, has also worked on incorporating new programs to its previous 13 departments.

The new Festivities program organizes holiday-themed events geared toward building morale for students. During the fall semester, Markowski said Festivities has planned pumpkin picking and painting activities.

Despite its success, Markowski said the group faces several challenges this semester, particularly when the elevator in LaFortune Student Center was being repaired.

“We hold the majority of our events in the ballroom because it’s the biggest space where we can pass out food, etc.” she said. “But we wanted to make sure all our events were available to all of campus so we had a difficult time planning the first half of the year with finding new locations.”

Looking forward to the spring, Markowski said the board has several items on its agenda. The group is currently searching for both an act and an alternate location for the annual spring concert.

“We’re trying to move it out of Stepan because we’ve seen complaints due to space that not everyone can attend if they want to,” Markowski said. “We’ve been looking at Compton [Family Ice Area] since they just had a concert there.”

The board is also charged this year with organizing the annual Holy Half Marathon for the first time in the run’s history.

“The run is normally bounced around between different people and class councils so we wanted a permanent home,” Markowski said. “That’s been a really big challenge, trying to do such a large event for the first time.”

SUB is also making changes to the Notre Dame Literary Festival.

“Most people go to events in the first two to three weeks of the semester so we’re trying to move the ND Literary Festival to the second week of classes,” Markowski said. “We’re looking at some authors for that. We want the theme to be authors that have books that have become movies, and we’re trying to have a movie watch go on with the authors.”

On a larger scale next semester, the group will work on reaching more students with its advertising.

Markowski, who lives off campus this year, said she realized how isolated some members of the student body are.

“I notice I don’t even see the posters, and I don’t go to hall council, so it’s really hard to reach some people,” she said. “We have a Facebook group, which just got one thousand followers, and we’d like to expand that to as many undergrads as possible.”

Contact Mel Flanagan at mflanaga@nd.edu

Student Union Board manager Ashley Markowski describes SUBs efforts so far this year and the groups plans for next semester. SUB will broaden its responsibilities to include the Holy Half in the spring.

GRADE: A

Student Union Board SUB hosted an incredibably successful fall event when Seth Meyers came to town, but will need to brace itself to handle the Holy Half on top of its regular duties.

Faculty Senate discusses graduate program issues

Senate chair focuses on standardizing faculty expectations, graduate student healthcare coverage

By TORI ROECK
News Writer

The Faculty Senate did not pass any resolutions this semester, but the group addressed the implications of controversial resolutions passed last semester and thoroughly discussed the consequences of future resolutions.

Although the group passed no resolutions this semester, Faculty Senate chair Doug Archer said last semester’s resolutions supporting Student Senate’s decisions to advocate for a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) on campus and the addition of sexual orientation to the University’s non-discrimination clause are still at the forefront.

The Board of Trustees struck the non-discrimination clause in the spring, but the University approved an unnamed official student organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (GLBTQ) students earlier this week.

The plan also included the creation of a new advisory board and the future hire of a full-time staff member to liaison between the administration and the student body.

In addition to the resolutions supporting Student Senate, Faculty Senate passed an important resolution last semester concerning health care for graduate students which continues to spark debate with administrators, Archer said.

“Graduate students can purchase insurance through the University for individuals... but they can’t purchase it for families,” Archer said.

The resolution urges the graduate school to subsidize more health care costs for students’ dependents because most of the affected parties are ineligible for state-sponsored Medicaid programs.

“Given that the University of Notre Dame is attempting to encourage more talented and brighter graduate students to attend the University and work with the faculty, the Faculty Senate believes one of the ways in which the University can show its commitment to graduate students and their families is to better provide for their health care needs at a level on par or better than our aspirational peers,” the resolution states.

Gregory Sterling, dean of the graduate school, responded to the resolution citing the weak economy for the school’s slow progress in complying with Faculty Senate’s requests. He also said the forthcoming Wellness Center will better address health concerns for graduate students and their dependents.

Currently on the agenda is the University’s lack of a conflict of commitment policy, Archer said. Notre Dame has a conflict of interest policy stating professors cannot invest money in companies associated with the University, but no policy exists that addresses professors’ time commitments, he said.

“A conflict of commitment policy specifically refers to those things that don’t fall into the category of teaching or research,” Archer said. “Examples would be serving on professional boards, or committees, serving as an editor of a journal, which are perfectly appropriate things to be doing but could theoretically interfere with one’s primary responsibility to teach.”

Archer said different departments have different expectations. For example, the Architecture Department requires its faculty to continue private practice. The Faculty Senate seeks to standardize these expectations somewhat, he said.

Another concern for Faculty Senate is examining new master’s degree programs to ensure they are keeping up with Notre Dame’s standards, Archer said.

“There has been a growth in the number of proposals coming down the pike,” he said. “The concern is that the quality of our graduate programs be maintained.”

Archer said the group focused mostly on research this semester and will work on drafting and passing resolutions come January.

Contact Tori Roeck at vroeck@nd.edu
College Night Council (CLC) hit overcrowding issue and inequalities in living amenities between dorms. “The board was very shocked to see the differences across dorms,” Rocheleau said. Some dorms lack basic amenities such as kitchens or a 24-hour space, he said, and evidence of overcrowding and dorm inconsistencies are manifested in formal complaints and “quint” five-person rooms in Panhellenic Hall and comparisons between double room sizes in Morrissey and Duncan Halls.

“Five girls living in a study area, that’s something that shouldn’t happen on campus especially with everyone paying the same amount of room and board,” Rocheleau said. The council presented this information, along with additional data, to the Board earlier this semester.

Additionally, Rocheleau said CLC has increased interaction with other administrators and outside sources, including a review of the Call to Action movement, a result of on-campus racial discrimination in February.

“CLC was very happy seeing that the Call to Action was moving forward, and it wasn’t just a one-semester thing,” he said. The council invited G. David Moss, senior consultant for Student Affairs, to speak about the Call to Action’s accomplishments.

“They want a ‘one-stop shop’ for reporting [acts of harrassment],” Rocheleau said. “Right now they’re piloting a class about educating students [about diversity].”

Most recently, council discussions have focused on campus safety, engaging in conversation with Notre Dame Security Police (NDS) and Sgt. Tracy Skibinski to review lighting on campus, Rocheleau said.

Since a new sculpture park, which will be erected between Compton Family Ice Arena and Eddy Street, will include a paved walkway, Rocheleau said NDS knows students will walk through the area and need proper lighting to feel safe.

Looking to next semester, the council members will turn their attention to medical amnesty, off-campus safety and modifications of the University’s non-discrimination clause.

Overall, Rocheleau said he considers the past semester a productive one for CLC. “I think CLC has been a great success this year,” he said. “I’ve been really happy with the different discussions we’ve had.”

Contact Carolyn Hutrya at chutrya@nd.edu
As the restructuring of the Saint Mary’s Student Government Association (SGA) settled in, student body president Maureen Parsons and vice president Meghan Casey found the transition smooth only last spring. When the year began, Parsons was unsure of how the students would handle the new structure of SGA, however she found that students were increasingly receptive of the changes and welcomed them happily.

"I think with the new structure, we have done a good job of completing our goals and staying focused on what we want to accomplish within our respective councils. One worry I had at the beginning of the year was that the councils would not stay connected with each other," Parsons said. "However, I think we have done a good job of communicating between the councils and keeping up to date on what everyone is doing. The senate sat on the councils this semester as well as being informed on what is going on." Casey, like Parsons, was originaly concerned with the communication between councils and the student body but found this worry to be misplaced.

"Continuing to improve communication through the new SGA structure is a huge priority of ours," Casey said. "Also, working to get more students to events on campus, whether it be sporting events or other activities held at Saint Mary’s is a big priority of ours as well for next semester." Parsons and Casey have played a large role in creating awareness of OrgSync, a place where students are able to access all communication from clubs on campus.

"I know that OrgSync really helped clubs and organizations stay organized and efficient. The new software, called the Belle Tower, creates a central location for clubs to communicate with their members as well as other clubs," Parsons said. "It also creates one spot for students to go to learn about upcoming events. In terms of finances and forms, the Belle Tower allows students to complete most all processes online."

The Belle Tower will cut down on all-school emails that students receive at the College, Parsons said. Through this new software, students can sign in and see everything they need regarding student involvement.

"Hope that the Belle Tower will increase student participation in organizations as well as student membership. The initiative has brought some difficulties, it has also been a great addition to the campus," Parsons said.

One of Casey’s priorities for next semester is improving communication between students and the Student Academic Council.

“Almost all of the departments have a representative on the council and students should know that if there is something they need, it is easily fixable through communication with the council and myself.”

Both Parsons and Casey said they are looking forward to next semester when the College celebrates Heritage Week.

"I think it is important week to highlight the tradition of the College and for girls to appreciate what Saint Mary’s is all about," Parsons said.

Students at Saint Mary’s show pride in the education receive at the College and thoroughly enjoy sharing their stories with alumnae, Parsons said.

"This year, we are working on bringing alumni back to campus and having them share their stories of their experiences at Saint Mary’s," she said. "I personally love the tradition and sense of sisterhood here at Saint Mary’s and really want to make sure Heritage Week brings students together to learn more about the heritage of the College.”

Ultimately, student input is a huge part of the success Parsons and Casey want to see for Saint Mary’s and its student body.

"We are implementing a comment box that will be placed in the Student Center at the beginning of next semester where students will be able to let us know what they like and don’t like, as well as what they would want to see during the semester, which is something we are really excited about," Casey said. "Feedback from the students is extremely important to us and Maureen and I hope that it will only improve where Saint Mary’s can go from here.”

Contact Jillian Barwick at jbarwi01@saintmarys.edu

SGA adjusts to new structure, promotes programming

By BRIDGET FEENEY
Associate Saint Mary’s Editor

The revamped Saint Mary’s Student Government (SGA) spent this year re-transitioning to a new structure while incorporating new initiatives into its traditional programming. The new SGA layout, approved by last year’s leadership, took effect at the start of this semester.

SGA adjusts to new structure, promotes programming

The revamped Saint Mary’s Student Government (SGA) spent this year re-transitioning to a new structure while incorporating new initiatives into its traditional programming. The new SGA layout, approved by last year’s leadership, took effect at the start of this semester.

"Now clubs have a bigger role within SGA. The Senate was also added to the new structure." With this new structure, Parsons said the reorganization has required some adjustments.

"With the new structure, we’ve had to shift responsibilities and take a look at who should be doing what," she said. "Each person’s role on SGA is more clearly defined. This allows each area of SGA to really focus on their purpose and work to get things done."

"Having different groups for each Council ... makes our meetings more focused and productive." Parsons said the initiative has been a great addition to the campus and hopes students take advantage of the new offerings.

"OrgSync utilizes technology in a way that we haven’t before," she said. "Club presidents, big boards and SGA members are able to use this resource to plan and advertise events. This transition will make things like budgeting, planning events and organizing group members much easier.

"The initiative has been a great addition to the campus and hopes students take advantage of the new offerings." Parsons said the initiative has been a great addition to the campus and hopes students take advantage of the new offerings.

"This year, we are working on bringing alumni back to campus and having them share their stories of their experiences at Saint Mary’s,” she said. “I personally love the tradition and sense of sisterhood here at Saint Mary’s and really want to make sure Heritage Week brings students together to learn more about the heritage of the College.”

"Ultimately, student input is a huge part of the success Parsons and Casey want to see for Saint Mary’s and its student body.

“We are implementing a comment box that will be placed in the Student Center at the beginning of next semester where students will be able to let us know what they like and don’t like, as well as what they would want to see during the semester, which is something we are really excited about,” Casey said. “Feedback from the students is extremely important to us and Maureen and I hope that it will only improve where Saint Mary’s can go from here.”

Contact Jillian Barwick at jbarwi01@saintmarys.edu

GRADE: A-

SGA The board has responded well to the new structure. However, much attention has been given to the smaller clubs and organizations on campus.

GRADE: A-

SGA The board has responded well to the new structure. However, much attention has been given to the smaller clubs and organizations on campus.

GRADE: A-

SGA The board has responded well to the new structure. However, much attention has been given to the smaller clubs and organizations on campus.

GRADE: A-

SGA The board has responded well to the new structure. However, much attention has been given to the smaller clubs and organizations on campus.
By ANNA BOARINI

Student Activities Board

Saint Mary's Student Diversity Board (SDB) works to spread awareness of the many different cultures on campus.

Senior president Maggie Galvin said the group began with its annual SDB Bonfire, which aims to "showcase of the talents from different cultures on both campuses."

The group also hosted a brand new event this year called "Watch Your Mouth," to promote awareness of the people use in everyday speech.

Galvin also said that group is trying to work with more of the multicultural organizations of Saint Mary's.

SDB will kick off its work next semester with "Sugar Makes the World Go Round," which will feature dessert dishes from around the world. Later in the semester SDB will sponsor annual events Disabilities Awareness Week, Women's Appreciation Week, and conclude with its Diverse Student Leadership Conference (DSLCL).

- Sarah Swiderski

By ANNA BOARINI

Residence Hall Association

Saint Mary's Residence Hall Association (RHA) has been hard at work this year under senior president Sarah Copi. RHA facilitates interaction between the hall councils and promotes a community atmosphere through its programming. Copi said that fall RHA events were a success. "RHA held a tailgate for the Michigan State vs. [Notre Dame] football game," she said. "This was a great way for girls to meet new people and show their spirit. We even had a few people doing push-ups."

The RHA also hosted a haunted house before Halloween. "All four hall councils worked together to decorate and create fun games and a haunted house," Copi said. "It was amazing to see the hall councils come together to plan such a successful event."

RHA is also responsible for Spirit Week, where dorms compete for the title "Hall of the Year." Next semester, RHA is planning the all-school formal and Lil' Sixes Weekend.

- Sarah Swiderski

First Year Board

The First Year Board's top priority this semester was creating a community service event in which they accepted donations for a local family. The board has seen an excellent turn out and is expecting more donations to come, board president Bri O'Brien said.

"Through this event we are hoping to encourage charity and community within in our class and school," O'Brien said. "We also made a video wishing our class a Happy Thanksgiving called the 'Gobble', which is a parody of the 'Wobble', and was a huge hit with our class."

The Board is utilizing Facebook polls on the first-year class page in order to better communicate with the class. O'Brien said.

Next semester, the Board is planning to put on the first ever "Belle Games," an event based off of "The Hunger Games."

"The purpose of 'The Belle Games' is our class has fun and get to know some Bellites they might not otherwise have had the opportunity to connect with."

- Jillian Barwick

Sophomore Board

Over the course of the fall semester, the Sophomore Class Board planned the Sophomore Formal. The formal was held Nov. 16. With a 1920s theme, the formal was a huge success for the Board, president Amy Trahan said. "I am so grateful to my vice president Anna Fanelli and to our Class Board for how much hard work they put in to make this fun event possible," Trahan said. As for next semester, sophomores can look forward to Sophomore Parents weekend, which will be held the weekend of Feb. 8. "Karen Johnson is helping us plan this event, as it is quite a big event, and it is important for parents to have a fun weekend with their daughter," Trahan said. After Sophomore Parents Weekend, we will be planning an Easter fundraiser and service event for our class.

- Jillian Barwick

Junior Board

The main priority of the junior class this year is unity. The majority of the class is back from studying abroad sophomore year, and the class is well into their perspective majors, Class Board president Carolyn Backes said. "As we get older we want our class to be closer with one another. As the smallest class at Saint Mary's we want to work together to remember these great four years that we will spend here," Backes said.

The class held their Junior Formal, which was themed "Famous Couples," this past weekend and it was a big success for the class.

"Our next big event is in April and it will be Junior Mom's weekend," Backes said. "This is a weekend that many of the girl's on campus have looked forward to since their freshman year."

This event will include a silent auction, a class ring blessing and many other events around campus celebrating the tradition and history of the College.

- Jillian Barwick

Senior Board

The group is now planning a second Buffalo Wild Wings Trivia Night, hoping it will prove as successful a fundraiser as the first.

This semester, Senior Board planned and hosted Senior Dad's Weekend, which board president Silvia Cuevas called a huge success. "Senior Dad's Weekend was a great time and started hypnotist Tom DeLuca on the Friday night of the weekend," Cuevas said. "It was an overall successful weekend full of great memories the seniors and their dads will definitely cherish forever."

Also included at Senior Dad's Weekend was a beer garden held in the Noble Family Dining Hall and a Boston College game watch at the Century Center in downtown South Bend on Saturday.

For next semester, the Senior Class Board will be busy preparing for the events during Senior Week, which includes the Senior Formal that will be held on May 10.

- Jillian Barwick