Who they are: Presidential candidate Michael Masi is a junior from Siegfried Hall and current director of University Affairs for student government. His running mate, Tim Scanlan, is a sophomore from Morrissey Manor, current director of Sophomore Council and former Freshman Class Council president. Masi hopes to leverage his student government experience to effectively tackle a wide range of goals relating to diversity, student life and community engagement.

“This campaign is really about fostering a community that is welcoming and inclusive. We believe in the Notre Dame family—a lot,” he said. “We’re seeking a Notre Dame that fosters and develops habits of the mind, body and spirit.”

First priority: Masi said his first plan of action is to ensure his team within student government is cohesive and efficient.

“The first priority I think takes place before we get into office,” Masi said. “It’s about putting together a team and uniting the Student Union,” Masi said. “By putting together the team that can accomplish the vision that we set here.”

Top priority: Scanlan said the ticket’s most important goal is also the one they are most passionate about.

“I think our social justice forum which we have planned is absolutely one of the more time-intensive things,” Scanlan said. “That brings students into an academic setting where they can truly present what they’ve been working on. Students here at Notre Dame across the area are very passionate about what they do (addressing social concerns) and we want to give them a formal opportunity to present that.”

Best idea: The Intercollegiate Forum on Social Justice is intended to bring students from other colleges to campus for student-led presentations on social concerns projects. If instituted, this could be a meaningful opportunity for connecting like-minded students and facilitating collaboration across universities.

Worst idea: Potentially establishing freshmen sections within dorms.

Most feasible: Individual student tickets to basketball games, Domer Dollars in dorm restaurants.

Least feasible: Guaranteed housing for transfer students, additional chain restaurants on campus. Residence halls are dealing with forced triples as it is, and bringing restaurants on campus often takes years.

Notable quote: “It’s a comprehensive vision (and we have) all the experience to do it. We want to come together as one family with one mission and create one Notre Dame and be united, inclusive and supportive.” – Masi

Fun facts: Masi is from Greeley, Colo., described a “South Park” episode as the exact opposite of Hawaii and referenced in “Fast Food Nation,” which claims you can smell the town before you can see it. Scanlan is from New Orleans and had never missed Mardi Gras before coming to Notre Dame.

Bottom line: The Masi-Scanlan ticket has by far the most experience within student government. If elected, the duo would likely hit the ground running. While many of their goals are lofty and broad, much of their platform is rooted in specific and achievable policies.

Who they are: Student body presidential candidate Billy Christy is a sophomore political science and peace studies major who lives in St. Edward’s Hall. A member of the Hesburgh-Yusko Scholars program, Roemer is also involved in the Take Ten program at the Center for the Homeless.

First priority: Christy and Roemer stressed maintaining the continuity of existing positive aspects of student government between their potential election and taking office on April 1 to prevent “a period of dead space” during the transition between administrations. Roemer said they’d do this by “walking a couple days” in the shoes of their predecessors, Brett Rocheade and Katie Rose.

Top priority: In addition to promoting greater transparency between student government and the student body, Christy and Roemer hope to create an undergraduate academic program that would provide students with hands-on work and research experience in the South Bend community while combatting local “brain drain” through a partnership with the Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement.

Best idea: Producing monthly YouTube videos outlining Student Government’s accomplishments in that time frame to enhance student participation with the student body and promote accountability throughout the organization.

Worst idea: Expanding Zipcar subsidies from the University.

With the high percentage of students who bring cars to campus, obtaining funding for a few more Zipcars on campus would have little impact on student mobility as a whole.

Most feasible: Establishing an alumni guest lecture series akin to a “career day” featuring Notre Dame graduates. Alumni generally love returning to campus, so this would be an attainable idea that would directly benefit current students.

Least feasible: Christy and Roemer include an important point in their platform regarding the implementation of a clause in du Lac, outlining the provisions of self-defense in cases of assault, but making this change is not feasible because du Lac will not be up for revision until after Christy and Roemer’s term in office would end.

Fun facts: Roemer lived in Delhi, India, for two years and graduated high school there. Christy has an irreligious, irrational fear of apartment buildings: “They have long hallways and no one’s really around…”

Notable quote: “If you ask your average students, ‘What does student government do?’ I think you’d be having a good, lucky day if you had one or two students give you a good answer and say, ‘Student government does XYZ, ABC things for me.’” – Roemer, on the often ambiguous responsibilities of student government.

Bottom line: Christy and Roemer clearly emphasized their intentions to dramatically improve transparency and communication between student government and its constituents on campus and provided some feasible avenues to facilitate that connection, but several of their platform ideas are either too vaguely defined or too low-impact to make their ticket stand out from this year’s pack of candidates.

Billy Christy | Pat Roemer

Kevin Salat | Paul Mascarenhas

Who they are: They are the student body presidential candidates and they are different. The Salat-Mascarenhas ticket has the best of both worlds: a seasoned student leader and an up-and-coming candidate.

Kevin Salat has a record of community involvement and academic success. A junior from St. Edward’s Hall, Salat has served as an officer in student government and a member of the Hesburgh-Yusko Scholars program, Roemer is also involved in the Take Ten program at the Center for the Homeless.

First priority: Salat reassured the editorial board of his ticket’s sincerity.

“We really want to represent the real interests of students and what they really want,” he said. What students really want, according to Salat and Mascarenhas? Demolishing Mod Quad for more parking, converting Hugger Hall into a workout facility and establishing a study abroad program in Carroll Hall.

First priority: Mascarenhas had a simpler goal for his ticket’s first day in office.

“Getting rid of Scholastic,” he said.

Top priority: The Salat-Mascarenhas ticket hopes to use proceeds from an expansion of Notre Dame Stadium to construct a monorail connecting Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s College.

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First priority: Mascarenhas suggested the monorail run on a high-frequency schedule.

“Like every three seconds,” he said.

Best idea: None

Worst idea: A $3 bus to Club Fever. Already exists. For free.

Most feasible: A shuttle bus to O’Rourke’s for the underage kids who don’t want to sober up on the long walk there,” according to the ticket’s platform.

Least feasible: The rest of them.

Fun facts: Despite some questionable policies toward our sister school, Salat admits to never having missed a non-Saint Mary’s student.

Despite some questionable policies toward our sister school, Salat admits to never having missed a non-Saint Mary’s student.

Notable quote: “I like penquins and I feel like other people like penguins and would just really want to see penguins.” – Salat

Bottom line: While Salat and Mascarenhas are likely to fail short as potential student body leaders, they do not disappoint as comedians. With a substantially more offensive platform than any in recent memory, The Observer is primarily pleased to just have assembled enough content fit for print.

Michael Masi | Tim Scanlan

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Who they are: While junior Dominic Romeo, a resident of Duncan Hall, lacks student government experience, his involvement at Notre Dame has ranged from walking onto the football team, leading marketing for The Shirt Project, going on an ISLSP in Tanzania and spending the fall semester in Beijing. Junior Philip Hootsmans, former vice president of Kenman Hall, also studied in Beijing and is a member of the rugby team. The candidates said they plan to build off their simple platform, with ideas garnered directly from students. “We picture ourselves more of a pipeline, I guess, for students to get what the want,” Hootsmans said.

First priority: Romeo said he would pick students’ brains through three avenues in his first week in office: open office hours, student focus groups and a combination of an online forum and a blog. “At the end of the week we’re going to put all these issues that we posted on a ballot,” Romeo said. “We’re going to send that out to the student body and we’re going to have them give us their feedback as to which they find most important. Based on a ranking, we’re going to develop a plan of action.”

Top priority: Romeo said he does not see one issue as his top concern because his ticket intends to prioritize based on student feedback. “I don’t have a concerto [top priority] because if I’m going to give you one it’s going to disregard the whole premise of our platform, which is to get the students’ feedback to find out what that is,” Romeo said.

Hootsmans said there was one issue the candidates would insist be addressed. “I think equality is a very big thing that we want to do here that avoids that issue because you have [GLBTQ] friends and you hear those stories,” he said. “That’s a big thing for us, making sure the [student organization] gets pushed through.”

Best idea: Open office hours, student focus groups and a concert the day of a night football game.

Worst idea: Decentralizing an already large and complex entity like student government could success- fully empower interested students to tackle issues directly but could also result in greater ineffi- ciency and more red tape.

Most feasible: Expanding printing to all academic buildings, putting battery recycling bins in all dorms.

Least feasible: Bringing bigger acts to Block Party — programmed through Legends, not student government — and distributing weekly student government newsletters.

Memorable quote: “There’s nothing more beautiful than driving down ND Avenue, looking at the Dome, and knowing you’re here. People being excluded from that community because of factors outside their control, be it the fact that they’re members of the LGBTQ community, be it that they’re eth- nic minorities, be it that they’re from foreign countries, be it the fact they’re from economically less privileged families or they’re homeless or for whatever rea- son, it’s tragic to us.” — Romeo

Fun facts: When Romeo and his family (recently) went to Disneyland, his family were a dif- ferent matching t-shirt each day. Hootsmans has three passports: one South African, one Dutch and one American.

Bottom line: While the ticket’s lack of student government experience may be a concern, the can- didates bring a freshening level of enthusiasm. With a broad range of experiences on and off campus, they have exceptional insight into the broad interests of students. Their vision for student govern- ment serving as a purely represen- tative body offers an opportunity for students to reengage with the sometimes-removed organization.

Dominic Romeo | Philip Hootsmans

Who they are: Student body presidential candidate Alex Coccia is a junior from Columbus, Ohio, who resides in O’Neill Hall from Granger, Ind., and plans to study political science and economics. He is currently cre- ating a community service project as part of the First Year Challenge. Vice presidential candidate Nick Boggess, a freshman accounting major and Education, Schooling and Society minor, is a South Bend native living in Zahn House.

Top priority: To continue the pair’s first priority of improving the Student Senate. South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg’s “Mayor’s Night Out” sessions. Least feasible: A continually popular yet unsuccessful platform point of prospective student body presi- dents, O’Brien and Boggess want to expand Flex Point ac- ceptance to include Eddy Street Commons. Nothing in their platform implies they could reverse this trend of rejection.

Fun fact: O’Brien and Boggess, friends since their time at St. Joseph’s High School, won a local Battle of the Bands competition last summer with their pop-rock cover group The Excellence Stirs Here.

Notable quote: “As local resi- dents, we have the benefit of seeing all the angles that you can possibly take, so that’s what I feel like would give us a big advantage when it comes to working especially with students here as well as those in the community.”- Boggess, on the merits of living in South Bend year-round.

Bottom line: The O’Brien- Boggess ticket expresses an ad- mirable desire to integrate Notre Dame with the greater South Bend community, but their ideas are too broad and contain few specific plans of action to achieve the over- arching goal of making South Bend a better college town. Though their perspective as local residents is unique, it diverted the pair’s focus too far from on-campus concerns. That said, their initiative in run- ning as freshmen holds promise for future campaigns.

Austin O’Brien | Nick Boggess

Who they are: Presidential can- didate Alex Coccia is a junior from Columbus, Ohio, who resides in Siegfried Hall. An Africana studies and peace studies major, Coccia serves as co-president of the Progressive Student Alliance and was a founding member of the 4-0-5 Movement on campus. Vice presidential candidate Nancy Joyce, a junior resident of Welsh Family Hall, is an Akron, Ohio, na- tive studying Arabic and econom- ics. She currently serves as Arabic Club vice president and is a mem- ber of Junior Class Council.

First priority: Joyce said she and Coccia will immediately focus on “smaller but more concrete” plat- form items relevant to daily life, such as installing a Redbox on campus.

Top priority: Institutionalizing a student town hall every month to foster communication between students and the administration.

Best idea: Creating a new Director of National Engagement and Outreach position on the Executive Cabinet to promote re- lationships with both peer institutions across the country, create bench- marks for student government and respond to national issues from a Notre Dame perspective.

Worst idea: Instituting an on-campus bike rental system. While many students choose to use bikes to get around, they aren’t absolutely necessary on a campus the size of Notre Dame’s.

Most feasible: Joyce and Coccia propose “Student Government Night Out” events to connect stud- ent government with the rest of the Notre Dame community. Joyce and Coccia are vocal about bolstering student government with resources in one facility for all academic students and the administration.

Best idea: Propose “student Government monthly newsletter.”

Bottom line: The relationships Coccia has formed as a driver of GLBTQ inclusion would pro- vide an invaluable head start to- ward the ticket’s long-term goals through communication and collaboration with University ad- ministration. The Coccia-Joyce vision is comprehensive but does not necessarily include any truly groundbreaking ideas.
The Observer endorses Romeo-Hootsmans

Saturday afternoon, The Observer Editorial Board interviewed all six tickets running for student body president and vice president, and each ticket brought its own spirit and ideas to the table. After extensive deliberation, The Observer endorses juniors Dominic Romeo and Philip Hootsmans for student body president and vice president.

In a pool of diverse candidates, Romeo and Hootsmans approached this election with a unique vision — a student government explicitly determined by student feedback.

We’ve heard these promises about being a voice for the student body over and over again. We’ve heard countless candidates promise to faithfully represent their fellow students to the administration before. We’ve heard about plans to make that second-floor office in LaFortune more accessible and more approachable for students. But Romeo and Hootsmans outlined a bold plan to revamp the way student government can actually prioritize student concerns.

Their hypothetical first week in office is already scheduled with plans for one-on-one, office hours-style meetings with students, open forum discussions and the addition of a blog component for student posts on the student government website. These meetings would produce a ballot of issues to be prioritized through student votes. Romeo and Hootsmans would structure their administration around student feedback — and this is the first time in recent memory that the student body at large would determine the agenda for its own student government.

They’re off to a good start, as they’ve begun their campaign by soliciting ideas for students to construct their platform. In the midst of these smaller ticket items and platform ideas on the Romeo-Hootsmans ticket is the formation of a formal alumni-student mentorship group, similar to a “Big Brother, Big Sister” program, that could strengthen the work of both the Career Center and the Alumni Association. And while some of these ideas have been attempted before with varying degrees of success, their plan for ballotting students would also allow student government to press for its goals with more clout than before — claiming to know what students want works best when students have actually had their say.

In one of the most competitive races in years, The Observer Editorial Board has chosen to endorse Dominic Romeo and Philip Hootsmans because we believe they would be a student body president and vice president who challenge us to engage in their administration more than any other in recent memory.

ELECTION TIMELINE

**ELECTION**

FEB. 6

**RUNOFF DEBATES**

FEB. 7

**RUNOFF ELECTION**

FEB. 11

**TERM BEGINS**

APRIL 1

THE CANDIDATES

**BILLY CHRISTY AND PATRICK ROEMER**

**ALEX COCCIA AND NANCY JOYCE**

**MICHAEL MASI AND TIMOTHY SCANLAN**

**AUSTIN O’BRIEN AND NICK BOGGESS**

**DOMINIC ROMEO AND PHILIP Hootsmans**

**KEVIN SALAT AND PAUL MASCARENHAS**

Should this pair be elected, students will need to meet the bar they set for participating in student government. Romeo and Hootsmans outlines a platform that would challenge the student body to actually pay attention to student government, not just to complain that it doesn’t know what student government does.

In the midst of these smaller ticket items and platform points, Romeo and Hootsmans also understood they would need to address a deeper issue at Notre Dame. In the past year, we have witnessed a racial hate crime on our campus. We have taken steps to be more inclusive to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (GLBTQ) students who have felt alienated in the past. The current student government administration dedicated a significant portion of time to consulting with administrators on both the Call to Action plan and the development of a GLBTQ student organization. Romeo and Hootsmans came forward with a passion for making sure these ideals continue to come to fruition in the culture of our campus.

To be sure, it’s a gamble. While their résumés include an impressive list of leadership positions, their experience within student government is almost nonexistent. Some of their platform items were hopelessly vague, such as the promise to “obtain closer relations between the dorms.” There are tickets with candidates who are perhaps more qualified and more organized. Juniors Alex Coccia and Nancy Joyce, for example, will be stiff competition for the pair, and with good reason. They bring an impressive platform and focused vision to their campaign, and we do not doubt that Coccia and Joyce would be successful in office as student body president and vice president. Junior Michael Masi and sophomore Tim Scanlan also approached their campaign with enthusiasm and focus that peaked our interest. The ballot this year is full of talent and ambition, but no ticket is more passionate about earnestly addressing students’ concerns than the Romeo-Hootsmans ticket.

Should this pair be elected, students will need to meet the bar they set for participating in student government. Romeo and Hootsmans outlined a platform that would challenge the student body actually to pay attention to student government. Not just complaining that it doesn’t know what student government does. They outlined a platform that requires us as students to think about and to voice our priorities for Notre Dame campus life. The bar is set, and it’s been set high.

In one of the most competitive races in years, The Observer Editorial Board has chosen to endorse Dominic Romeo and Philip Hootsmans because we believe they would be a student body president and vice president who challenge us to engage in their administration more than any other in recent memory.