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

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“We’ve been able to push a lot of initiatives that we had from the get-go through the help of the administration and our directors.”

Lauren Vidal student body president

Vidal described the first few weeks in office as a learning experience for both herself and Devine. She said the two of them have developed a good working relationship with various branches of student government and the administration.

“I think where we are right now is at a very good understanding of our campus government and what we’ve contributed to our campus and how we can build it in the next few months,” Vidal said. “We’ve learned from relationships, from administrators; we’ve learned a lot from communicating.

“We’ve learned that there are some gaps in communicating through different bodies of student government, whether that be communication through Senate or CLC or even faculty senate” Vidal and Devine both cited transparency and communication as issues that they have been working on and will continue to improve next semester.

“There are disconnects that we are learning of, and we learned that, I think, most vividly through the 29 for 29 initiative,” Vidal said. “We really had to work to ensure that we were communicating through all the proper parties, and there were times when certain bodies didn’t feel like they were informed.

“We learned a great deal from that and we are taking steps to improve how our government communicates generally because that’s always been a lack and we understood that there have been these gaps.”

Vidal said she and Devine had both been reaching out to different groups in order to foster better communication between different branches of student government, particularly the two who have recently been working with the Hall President’s Council (HPC).

“We have opened conversation really extensively with HPC,” she said. “We’re working hand in hand with [student government department heads] to really make sure the halls presidents and the hall councils are informed, from their end and our initiatives but also through Senate.

“Matt chairs Senate, and he really tries to make sure the senators are up to date and are providing feedback of what’s going on campus.”

Promoting transparency

The issue of transparency, while not new, has been something particularly important to this administration, Vidal said.

“I think transparency has been a huge thing for us because as long as I can remember transparency has always been a goal of student government, but I think this year we’ve been fortunate in building on the foundation that was set forward by previous administration to enhance transparency, and we’ve gotten a lot of feedback,” Vidal said.

According to Devine, the administration’s transparency efforts go beyond simply being open and honest and involve a more asservative approach.

“It’d say it’s like an active transparency, not just not hiding anything, which obviously we don’t, but also just making sure that everything we do is known and even things that are works in progress — not even necessarily just finished projects, but things that are in development, things that are in the brainstorming stages,” he said.

The result of this active transparency is more student involvement and participation in student government, Vidal said.

“We’ve been able to list initiatives that we’re working on, and students have reached out and said ‘hey, I’d love to work on this,’ even just as an outsider,” she said.

“They’re not affiliated with student government at all. And that’s been really exciting for us.”

“That was our goal, to make sure that people would be part of the formula, not just seeing the end of the equation,” Vidal said.

“We wanted to make sure that if someone saw that something we were doing was ineffective, they would be able to provide feedback and we could change that. And we’ve seen that — we’ve seen it in 29 for 29, and in O’snap, in College Readership, in Quad Markets — we’ve been fortunate there.”

Looking back on the year, Vidal said two particular issues received more feedback than others: campus safety and communication with the administration on major decisions that the University is making.

“So what we’ve done with that is really opened lines of communication with main building, just making sure that students are aware of what’s going on,” Vidal said. “One of the results of that will be a town hall with [University president] Fr. [John] Jenkins.”

Planning for the future

Looking forward, Vidal and Devine have several tangible goals and projects to accomplish before leaving office at the end of March.

“As we’re going through our initiatives and really tailoring them to the current student body and their needs, we’ve found there are other initiatives we’ve needed to take up just in terms of the climate on campus,” Vidal said.

“One of those was campus safety, which we didn’t initially think was going to be so salient in our campus now,” Vidal said. “We thought O’snap would be an excellent platform for campus safety, but with some of the crime recently in the South Bend area and some of the conversations we’ve had with students who are concerned off-campus, we’ve picked up several initiatives to fully address the concerns of our peers — our constituency, really — to make sure that we’re answering their questions.

“One of the things we’re doing is working on a campus safety video; that’s actually in production right now,” she said. “We’re going to release it to the student body, and it’s through recommendations from code enforcement in South Bend, conversations with local law enforcement, conversations with [the Community/Campus Advisory Coalition] to just ensure that our students are aware of the resources and make sure we’re really addressing this.”

Also on the horizon for next semester is “It’s On Us,” the new sexual assault prevention campaign, Vidal said. The “One Is Too Many” and “It’s On Us” campaigns both sprang from White House initiatives bearing the same names that were implemented at universities across the country.

“(One Is Too Many) was brought to our campus last year, and it was a great success here,” Vidal said. “This year they’re working on ‘It’s On Us’ and so [student government director of gender issues] Kristen [Loehle] has been in communication with some of the people in Washington, D.C., to figure out how to best bring that here and how that will look on this campus.”

Devine described the new campaign and how it will differ from the previous one.

“It’s On Us’ is going to take a similar tone, but it’s also trying to build off ‘One Is Too Many,’” he said. “‘One Is Too Many’ was more of an awareness campaign, but ‘It’s On Us’ is a more actionable phrase.

While neither the focus on campus safety or ‘It’s On Us’ was originally part of the pair’s plan for their tenure, Vidal and Devine both said they were excited about the feedback they had received from their constituents and were looking forward to next semester.

“We’ve come a long way from our vision that we had in the beginning — we’ve added a lot of tangibility to it,” Devine said.

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Punch cards promote student participation

By HALEIGH EHMSEN
Associate Saint Mary’s Editor

Saint Mary’s Student Government Association (SGA) launched the SMCard this semester to improve the attendance at campus events.

The card rewards students for attending events sponsored by Campus Ministry, the Center for Disability, Athletics, Belles Against Violence Office, SGA, Student Activity Board (SAB) and Student Diversity Board (SDB).

The initiative, pronounced S-M-C-card, offers prizes to Saint Mary’s students who engage in the College community, student body president and senior McKenna Schuster said.

“This initiative has been developed by the Student Government Association to help increase attendance at all events on Saint Mary’s campus,” Schuster said.

“We wanted to create an incentive for students to attend events while boosting school spirit and morale,” Schuster said.

Attendance has doubled at events, Schuster said, evident at the release of the SMCard in early October. SDB’s annual bonfire usually hosts about 50 students, but more than 300 came out to get their cards stamped and engage in the events at the bonfire, Schuster said.

“There is a lot of hype created around the bonfire, and we thought it would be a great way for students to get their first stamp to start off,” Schuster said.

The cards were designed by marketing and media committee chair Katie Calhoun, a junior. Calhoun said the SMCard was an exciting way to improve attendance at events.

“We will only have 12 winners, but we have definitely seen more student participation around campus,” Calhoun said.

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‘Working well together’

Schuster, Moorhead tackle internal structure concerns and develop novel programming at Saint Mary’s

By HALEIGH EHMSEN
Associate Saint Mary’s Editor

Student body president and vice president McKenna Schuster and Sam Moorhead, both seniors, have worked to enhance transparency, accountability and enthusiasm for Student Government Association (SGA) this year.

Beginning with transparency, Schuster said they want the student body to know what SGA does and what events are going on. They have organized a bulletin board in the Student Center with photos of all the SGA chairs so students know to whom they should direct comments and concerns.

Schuster said their marketing chair, junior Katie Calhoun, has ramped up their social media campaign using Instagram to inform students about events, as well as utilizing fliers in the bathroom they call “stall news.”

Response to the SGA budget problems last year, Schuster and Moorhead have worked to hold their chairs accountable to their duties and positions.

“We have worked on transparency and everybody has been working well together,” Schuster said. “We have seen a lot more follow-through the things we have been planning are actually happening.”

Moorhead said SGA has not seen the same kind of budget problems they had last year since she and Schuster have emphasized spending within the means, as well as revising the finance bylaws so everyone can see how much each club is allotted.

This year, Schuster and Moorhead have said they have been working with senior Kelly Gutrich, vice president of internal affairs, to revise SGA’s constitution.

Moorhead said the constitution was not cohesive and concise and Gutrich and her constitution committee have been revising it all semester. They put forth the new version for a vote at the Dec. 10 Senate Meeting.

Schuster said SGA has had to overcome the complications ensuing from the disbanding of Student Involvement and Multicultural Services (SIMS) and subsequent loss of the three SIMS advisors who served on SIMS.

“It was good that we have been really organized and holding our chairs accountable because otherwise that transition to a new advisor might have been more difficult,” Schuster said.

Another one of Schuster and Moorhead’s goals was to increase attendance at events, which is happening in part because of their marketing campaign, but is also due to a new implementation of SMCards, Schuster said. She said attendance at SGA events has doubled due to the SMCards which reward students for attending events on campus like lectures, campus ministry events and sporting events.

In addition to attendance rising at events, Schuster and Moorhead have worked to increase communication and openness in their office.

“Our meetings are really productive, and we’ve really seen organization and follow through as a large improvement this year,” Moorhead said.

Schuster said the various SGA chairs have been working together and holding each other accountable to make their events the best they can be.

“They are being creative and taking the initiative, when people actually want to see things happen,” Schuster said.

In the past, Moorhead said the sustainability chair position hasn’t been utilized to its fullest, but they saw that change this year as the chair helped to plan Food Week.

Moorhead said they have reached out to the Notre Dame student body president and vice president, as well as the Holy Cross student body president and vice president, to keep them updated on what SGA is doing and to talk about the larger concern of campus safety.

“We want to make sure that our students are safe on and off campus,” Schuster said. “We want students to know what cars are trusted and make sure that cars won’t deny students because Saint Mary’s is another block further.”

Moorhead echoed Schuster’s concern.

“We want to make sure Saint Mary’s students are as safe as other students,” Moorhead said.

Schuster and Moorhead have a “Big Sister, Little Sister” program in the works where first-year students would be paired up with a junior to help guide the student through the challenges of the first year of college.

“This program provides advice and guidance because the first year can be rough,” Moorhead said. “We believe we can help to fix that by pairing first-year students with someone who already knows and love Saint Mary’s.”

This program differs from the Peer Mentor program, which provides a junior or senior to advise a class of all first-year students.

“We want a program that exists outside of the classroom so students can go to their ‘big sis’ for anything,” Moorhead said.

Schuster and Moorhead said they are focused on building the groundwork for SGA to be the best it can be in the upcoming years.

“We want to make girls feel as welcome as we can,” Schuster said. “While this can’t necessarily happen during our time in office, we don’t want to just turn down good ideas because we can’t see them happen.

“We encourage girls to keep going, and it’s exciting because we have many underclassmen who are enthusiastic and want to see their work continued.”

Moorhead said they have exciting events planned for the spring, including a spring fling event to enhance campus unity.

“It’s in the works, but it’s going to be a fun event for the whole campus,” Moorhead said.

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Seniors Sam Moorhead (left) and McKenna Schuster, Saint Mary’s student body vice president and president, won the March 4 election for the highest offices of the Student Government Association.

Photo courtesy of McKenna Schuster
Bolstering a relationship with South Bend

By Jack Rooney
Associate News Editor

In a February interview with The Observer, now-student body president Lauren Vidal said the top priority for her and vice president Matthew Devine, both seniors, was to promote service both on campus and in the community. “We really have this idea of service, and although we understand that’s a broad term, we really prioritize service to our peers and to our community as a whole,” she said in the interview.

Now, 10 months into their term leading Notre Dame’s student government, Vidal and Devine have narrowed their service focus while also expanding their vision of a more complete, mutually beneficial relationship between students and the city of South Bend.

“We’ve really tried to be very deliberate with how we approach that idea of students going out into the community and trying to also balance bringing part of the culture of South Bend to campus and staying true to each other in ways that fit their lifestyle so that they can go off into South Bend and explore, or at least have some sort of visibility to what South Bend is,” Devine said.

Through programs such as Quad Markets, the recently launched student government-led quarterly in which pairs of each residence hall with a South Bend family that has recently moved out of the Center for the Homeless in order to build relationships between students and South Bend residents — and the annual Comm/University Day, during which pairs of each residence hall with a South Bend family that has recently moved out of the Center for the Homeless in order to build stronger relationships and create a stronger bond between the University and the city — South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg said the relationship has grown deeper over the course of Vidal and Devine’s administration and recent years.

“I think our relationship is enviable as college towns go,” Buttigieg said. “I’ve been in university communities where there isn’t a good relationship, where it’s either hostile — I’d say that’s true at, for example, Harvard and Cambridge — or where the university and the community are kind of doing their own thing and not very involved with each other. “There is a lot of mutual respect,” he said.

While University president Emeritus Fr. Theodore (Ted) Hesburgh advanced Notre Dame as a global institution during his administration, Buttigieg said, University administrators and students have continued to cultivate an international presence, but also develop a robust relationship with the local community.

Buttigieg said collaborative projects such as an Eddy Street Commons, the Notre Dame Center for Arts and Culture on West Washington St., the Notre Dame Techmachine Facility and Notre Dame involvement in community organizations such as La Casa de Amistad and the St. Vincent de Paul Society, are recent developments that have greatly benefited both the city and the University.

“All of that would have been very hard to picture 10 or 20 years ago,” Buttigieg said.

In response to recent student feedback, Vidal and Devine have also addressed the issue of crime in the community in collaboration with local law enforcement agencies, holding periodic meetings with representatives from the University, city, county and state levels.

“In terms of the relationship with South Bend, finding the most effective channels of communication has been a key to our relationship with local law enforcement,” Vidal said.

“It’s been a huge success. We’ve seen that real opportunity for communication between all the parties allows us to figure out what’s really happening in terms of looking at all the instances of crime or robbery or burglary and figuring out what we can do as students to encourage safety and what they can do to better in terms of serving us,” Buttigieg said.

Buttigieg said clear channels of communication between students and the city extend beyond law enforcement, and there is still room for growth in the relationship.

“There are so many different dimensions to the relationship — students as people who get involved, volunteer, start things do things in the city; students as residents, whether you’ve got students living in the city limits or not, they’re in the community and so we need to make sure we’re meeting the needs of students, and there’s no better voice for that than student government, and students as participants in the economy, working or shopping or eating or drinking in the city,” he said.

“All of those things will work better if student government is able to create a flow of information between the university and the local community. And that’s really exciting,” he said.

Vidal said small changes, like signs pointing out that downtown South Bend is less than two miles from the heart of campus, can help make a positive difference.

“Devine said more students have also contributed to the growth of the relationship by taking advantage of work experience available in South Bend.

“Ties are for the students to know and then where the needs are for us to know, so that we’re doing a better job of connecting students to the community at large. I think a more structured relationship would probably help us get a feel for students’ minds and how much access they feel they have to the city,” Buttigieg said.

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By CATHERINE OWERS
News Writer

For one of the term’s first major policy initiatives, student body president Lauren Vidal and vice president Matthew Devine, both seniors, set out to augment late night student transportation on campus with the Student Nighttime Auxiliary Patrol (SNAP).

SNAP allows Notre Dame Security Police (NDSP) student employees to use two Global Electric Motor (GEM) cars to give students rides at night, NDSP Sergeant Tracy Skibins said. Two GEM golf carts supplement the service during inclement weather.

SNAP runs Sunday through Wednesday from 8:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m., and on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, it runs from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. Skibins said.

Vidal said SNAP came to fruition after discussing campus safety with Assistant Police Chief Thomas Mallahan. NDSP is looking for tangible ways to positively impact the student experience through a necessary safety initiative.

“Thus far, it has been a very positive initiative, but overall we will continue to build upon the program to tailor it to Notre Dame’s campus climate,” Vidal said.

Skibins said the service averaged approximately 650 rides per month during October and November. As of Saturday, it has gathered in approximately 650 rides per month during October and November.

Students can receive rides from SNAP by calling NDSP or going to the substation in the lower level of LaFortune Student Center, Skibins said.

“Students who arrive at LaFortune can go up to the student employee and request a ride that way, if they don’t want to call on the phone,” she said.

The service also offers safety tips, information on how to register property and all the different resources available to them through NDSP. That’s brand new, too, and it’s tied in with the SNAP program,” Skibins said. The SNAP service fits NDSP’s larger mission to promote student safety, and NDSP still offers assistance when the program is not operating.

“Let’s say its 3:30 a.m. and the service is no longer operating, or its 8 p.m. and the service has not started yet — we won’t turn anyone away if you call NDSP,” Skibins said.

“NDSP is thrilled to be working together with student government in offering this service to students,” she said. “NDSP and SNAP student employees realize that what we are doing is as efficient as possible and as useful as possible, and we expect improvement along the way.”

Vidal said the SNAP service has received positive feedback so far, and her administration continues to develop services that reflect student needs.

“We will be utilizing vans, provided by Notre Dame Transportation, for the heavy winter snows, so that students will still get safe, reliable and warm transportation,” she said. “The mobile app is almost completely developed, thanks to [the Office of Information Technologies] and NDSP’s help, and we will be launching it soon. The mobile app will have choices for pick up and drop off locations all around campus and will send a message straight to dispatchers.

“O’Snap is still being worked on, as we are always looking to make the program better, but we have seen a huge increase in ridership and students utilizing safe and reliable transportation in the evenings. This is what we set out to do, now we will work through out the remainder of the year to make it even stronger.”

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THE ND SMBC CLASS BOARDS

FIRST-YEAR BOARD

The Saint Mary’s Junior Class Board aims to create class affluence and cohesion through programs, events and fundraisers for class unity. The board of six first-year students coordinated a Harvest Festival event earlier this fall, and they are working with upperclassmen to plan a Little St. Mary’s service project. Megan Dekker, vice president of the freshman class, and the Board is planning the College’s first Freshman Parents’ Weekend to take place in February. In addition, they are hosting a study event Dec. 12 called Click. Cram. Come. The board has a fundraiser planned when students return from winter break.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE: O’SNAP

O’Snap promotes safe transportation

On four Sunday mornings this semester and last spring, student government sponsored Political Brew, during which members of student government and political clubs, as well as anyone interested in current events, gathered in the McNeill Room in LaFortune Student Center to watch and discuss NBC’s “Meet the Press.”

Sophomore Elizabeth Fenton, who directs the National Engagement and Outreach (NEO) department of student government and organizes the brews, said student body president Lauren Vidal and vice president Matthew Devine, both seniors, suggested the idea at the beginning of their administration, and it soon became NDSM’s primary event.

“I thought it was a good idea, and then we hit the ground running with it with the first one, which was in April,” Fenton said. “All the subsequent ones I’ve just completely taken over myself. That’s the main thing that we do.”

Fenton said each Political Brew has had a similar format: attendees come in, get bagels and coffee and watch “Meet the Press,” which frames the discussion that follows.

“Depending on the show, if there’s a large topic that should be discussed immediately, I’ll mute the program and we’ll open the discussion,” Fenton said. “When discussion is closed I’ll turn ‘Meet the Press’ back on and continue the same forum. If not, at the commercial break I’ll mute it and we’ll recap what was just said on ‘Meet the Press,’ and we’ll discuss it that way.”

Fenton said topics have ranged from the November midterm elections to the Bay Rice scandal.

“It doesn’t necessarily have to be political, but most often current,” she said. “It just depends on what topic is on the program. If we want to talk about something I think is worth discussing – I’m very up to date on current events, so I’ll just throw out, ‘so what do you guys think of this?’ and that gets the conversation going.”

Since the first political brew this semester in April, attendance has risen from about 30 to approximately 50 people, Fenton said.

Senior Michelle McCartney, president of the College Democrats, said the event was a way for club members to speak with people with differing political views.

“Political Brew is a great event where our members can engage in dialogue with students outside of College Democrats.”

Senior Mark Gianfalla, president of the College Republicans, said the event has a lot of potential for future events.

“The overall goal would be to get more people informed of what’s going on, because as much as people like to think they know what’s happening, a lot of people don’t,” he said. “There’s a nice spread for you if you show up. There’s some engagement in intelligent dialogue with others.”

Political Brew can also appeal to students not affiliated with political clubs, Fenton said.

“People don’t always come to get more informed of what’s going on and to like to people who have a lot of information on current events,” she said. “... From both groups we’ve gotten a lot of feedback.”

McCarney also hopes faculty will attend Political Brews in the future and she wants to enlist the help of the administration or even NBC.

“The administration actually contacted us two Political Brews ago, commending us for the ‘Meet the Press’ idea because that’s what the school is affiliated with,” she said. “I didn’t even think of that when we chose ‘Meet the Press,’ I just thought it was a good middle ground between the parties, but they love it.”

But the main goal, Fenton said, is to encourage people to keep up with current events.

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Contact Emily McConville at emcon1@nd.edu

STUDENT GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE: POLITICAL BREW

Student director engages campus in political debate

By EMILY McCONVILLE
News Writer

“It’s a nice way to start the morning on Sunday. It’s not too early,” he said. “There’s a nice spread for you if you show up. There’s some engagement in intelligent dialogue with others.”

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Contact Emily McConville at emcon1@nd.edu
SUB improves visibility, promotes annual events

By MADISON JAROS
News Writer

Junior Scott Copeland, ex-
cutive director of the Student Union Board (SUB), said the or-
mation’s main focus this se-

Merger of student government with clubs on campus by enhancing tra-
ation of SUB events and in-

We do that through a variety of ways, like we put on the spring concert; we do stress relievers during finals week,” Copeland said.

SUB began the school year with events. Copeland said both “enhance the first experi-

cial interest, performing arts,

SUB also hoped to branch out this semester, Copeland said. It worked with the Native American Student Alliance (NASAND) to celebrate Native American heritage month on campus and reached out to

other underrepresented groups throughout the semester. SUB also introduced new events, including a bus trip to the Mockingjay premiere.

“That was one of our goals this semester, to branch out, do some new things,” Copeland said. “We brought a spoken word artist, the Asia Project, to campus, and that was one of the first times we’d done that.”

Coordinating the brand-new events this semester required additional planning and cre-
a\vitiety from SUB members, Copeland said.

“We try to prevent the rein-

We wanted to put on awesome, events, of course, but we wanted to collaborate with other clubs, we wanted to in-
corporate more student groups in our events, again, getting back to our mission, which is to enhance the undergraduate experience,” Copeland said. “I think we’ve done a great job of that this semester.”

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Council revamps internal structure, updates policies

By KAYLA MULLEN
News Writer

Though a lesser-known branch of student government, the Club Coordination Council (CCC) plays a large role in the task of helping Notre Dame’s more than 200 clubs function on a daily basis.

The CCC is comprised of club members elected by their peers to represent and oversee all the recognized student clubs on campus, senior Jimmy McIntee, president of the CCC, said. The members are divided into six subdivisions: academic, athletic, special interest, performing arts, cultural and social service, he said.

The CCC has two major re-
sponsibilities, in my opinion. First, we allocate the funds given to us by the university — approximately $300,000 — to all of the undergraduate clubs,” McIntee said. “Second, we oversee the new club process at Notre Dame, voting on whether to approve programs and policies for the CCC,” McIntee said.

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The CCC’s goals for next semester, according to McIntee, will focus on student mental health issues on campus, according to student body president Lauren Vidal, chair of the CCC.

“There is a national upward trend in student stress, and we have seen this spike mirrored in the lives of Notre Dame stu-
dents,” Vidal said. “We began the year with a preliminary report to the Board of Trustees on student stress, and we decided, through our finding, that Notre Dame was in fact a unique environment, with a more unique structure that we can capitalize on to become a university with an exceptional level of wellness resources and support.”

The CCC, a forum for students, faculty and administrators to dis-
cuss student affairs, created three task forces to dive more in-depth into student stress and mental health, Vidal said.

“The academic task force has looked at specifically what our learning environment looks like and how our ideal academic university — Notre Dame, and one that is centered specifically around enhancing the Notre Dame experience,” Vidal said.

“Our goal is to thoroughly un-
derstand and potentially provide recommendations or policies that might be put in place to better serve our students,” Tarnacki said.

Vidal said next semester CCC will put their work into action.

“We will build meetings with the new team from the McDonald Center [for Student Well-Being] in an attempt to craft a Center that serves to enhance the Notre Dame experience,” Vidal said.

With regards to their goals next semester, sophomore Badin Hall senator Helen Hathaway said the CCC has established a timeline of points to accomplish.

“We have devoted this school year to discussing and research-

mental health concerns

By KATIE MCCARTY
News Writer

The Campus Life Council (CLC) has focused on student mental health issues on campus, according to student body president Lauren Vidal, chair of the CLC.

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dents,” Vidal said. “We began the year with a preliminary report to the Board of Trustees on student stress, and we decided, through our finding, that Notre Dame was in fact a unique environment, with a more unique structure that we can capitalize on to become a university with an exceptional level of wellness resources and support.”

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“We will build meetings with the new team from the McDonald Center [for Student Well-Be
Leaders adjust news options for students
By ANN MARIE JAKUBOWSKI
Editor-in-Chief
Before they could bring copies of The Wall Street Journal to campus this year, student body president and vice president Lauren Vidal and Matthew Devine needed to make a series of behind-the-scenes changes.
In the past, student government coordinated Notre Dame’s participation in the College Readership Program through the Gannett Company, which brought copies of The New York Times, USA Today and The South Bend Tribune to campus. After discussions with the student senate and re-search, Vidal said they decided to end the relationship with Gannett and instead negotiate individual contracts with The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.
Their research showed that the college’s readership program was a significant expense, that only about 20-30 people picked up The South Bend Tribune copies per day and that many students expressed a desire for access to The Wall Street Journal, especially for business classes.
(“The College Readership Program) was very costly,” Vidal said. “We knew it was going to be an undertaking, but we said ‘what if we try to create our own program?’ And so we negotiated the contracts in such a way that we were going to save money, and with the money saved, we created a student job. We’re proud of that.”
Devine said the first priority was seriously evaluating student input on the program instead of continuing the established system by default. When the contract renewal period came up with the Gannett Company in the spring, he said the department of academic affairs decided to change courses.
“We were in a negotiation process with The Wall Street Journal for a month,” Vidal said. “They don’t typically do this kind of a thing (outside of a special program) basically just created our own readership program with two individual contracts, one with The New York Times and one with The Wall Street Journal.”
Two student employees are now tasked with distributing the papers to both dining halls and to LaFortune Student Center each morning. Devine said 400 copies of The Wall Street Journal and 300 copies of The New York Times are available in total. Online access for The Times is also available.
Vidal said, “We really have received nothing but positive feedback about the program.”
Our whole perspective throughout the decision to eliminate the Tribune was not that we were shifting our focus away from the community in any way. “We were just trying to figure out a better way to help people be involved in the community. This service wasn’t being taken advantage of, so we thought we could figure out a better way to stay connected to the community.”
Devine said they did not get any reaction from the Tribune after the subscription was cut, probably because it was a secondary relationship administratively.
“What’s important to emphasize is that this really wasn’t a hasty decision,” Vidal said. “We’ve been saving money with this system, and we’re able to pay students to work a new job above minimum wage.”
Their opinions are based in hands-on experience — for the first five weeks of the program, Vidal and Devine delivered the papers themselves at 6 a.m. before they could hire regular employees.
“We did have some kinks in the beginning of the process, but too, but not for the Journal.
The decision to eliminate The South Bend Tribune subscription was based on the low readership numbers they found, Devine said. “It wasn’t a hasty decision,” Vidal said. “We really have received nothing but positive feedback about the program.”
Contact Ann Marie Jakubowski at ajakub01@nd.edu

Assembly focuses on safety
By JESSICA MERDES
News Writer
Student body vice president and senior Matthew Devine said he has been very proud of the “work and commitment” of the senators during the semester.
“I have loved meeting and working with Senate this year,” he said. “Its members are some of the brightest and most enthusiastic leaders of the campus community. We are all working together to better our University.”
Senate has already taken serious steps in addressing widespread issues this semester with the rise of campus safety concerns.
“Campus safety has been at the forefront of our conversations most recently,” Devine said. “Following the Safety Summit at the beginning of this year and in response to the most recent off-campus crime reports, Senate began to discuss ways to both protect and educate students about how to live and work safely both on and off campus.”
To address these issues, Senate has “enhanced interactions” with the South Bend police and Notre Dame Security Police (NDSP) to increase student awareness of safety resources and is in the process of making a campus safety video. Most noticeably, the implementation of O’SNAP at the beginning of the year has taken serious steps to improve campus safety.
At the beginning of the semester, Senate met with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to discuss the new printing quota system by default. The group has also shown strong commitment to meeting the needs of student with disabilities, making changes that directly impact our students at Notre Dame.
In response to student concerns about printing quota, there is now a working group of Senate members tasked with creating a new system.
Devine said Senate plans to continue addressing issues related to campus safety and mental health of students and to continue discussing some of the more short-term goals such as University’s policy towards auditing courses, revision of the DARTing and class search processes, sexual assault prayer services, national engagement and the distribution of daily press clips and library renovations.
Contact Jessica Meredes at jmerdes@nd.edu

SMC COUNCIL OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Group undertakes campus-wide programming
By KELLY KONYA
Saint Mary’s Editor
Student Government Association’s (SGA) Council of Committee Chairs (CCC) sought to continue last year’s goal of transparency as well as increase student attendance in events this semester, CCC director and vice president of external affairs Katie Staer said.
Staer, a senior, said the 18 committee chairs and co-chairs work to address student interests and needs in the most effective way possible. The committees include alumnae, athletic, community, first-years’ concerns, food services, international, market research and media, mission, social concerns, Sophias Program, sustainability and technology.
“Our of the 12 committees, the media chair has been the one that has seen the most changes this year,” Staer said. “Katie Calhoun, who is the chair of the committee, has worked extremely hard to make sure all of the SGA events are advertised on all social media outlets. She also personally designs the t-shirts for many of the events.
“Katie [Calhoun] has been a huge help this year in furthering our overarching goal in SGA to improve student participation and attendance.”
Staer said the committee chairs and co-chairs meet on a weekly basis to update each other on the issues that come up, student feedback on events or their upcoming plans and goals.
“We are a very collaborative group, and as one of our main goals this year is to have every committee planning more events in order to best utilize our budgets. It’s great to have these weekly meetings so we can all join forces and inspire each other to be successful,” she said. “Our CCC budget is larger than it has been in the past, so we are all trying our best to reap the most benefits from this upgrade.”
Five of the committees put on “big weeks” on campus to highlight different issues among the campus community and raise awareness of different social concerns. These “big weeks” take extensive planning — the committee works months in advance to design the weeks — and thus, the committee’s duties are mostly narrowed to one specific week.
“I think that’s something that could definitely be improved,” international co-chair and senior Catherine Sullivan said. “Right now, it’s like the committee chairs have their ‘big weeks’ to focus on, and then they are pretty much done for the year after the week takes place.
“My chair is one of the few positions that actually has to think of committee work for two months, since I don’t have a ‘big week’ to plan for. It helps me involve my issue of the international community at Saint Mary’s in events throughout the year.”
Staer said the “big weeks” that have taken place already this fall semester have been Support a Belle, a Love (SABL) and Food Week. SABL was organized by social concerns co-chair and sophomore Kathryn Tarullo and Chloe Deramek, and Food Week was planned by food services chair and sophomore Mary Kate Luft and sustainability co-chairs Chelsea Fattal and Eleanor Jones, both juniors. (Editor’s note: Luft is a Viewpoint copyeditor at The Observer. Fattal is a News writer.)
“Twas really impressed with both of the ‘big weeks’ that have happened so far,” Staer said. “I think that [the committees] understand that to stay relevant and useful their emphases are on diversity.”
“The CCC will be especially busy helping the alumnae and mission concerns committees and our concerns committee plan Heritage Week and Love Your Body Week, respectively, in the spring semester, Staer said.
“Since student attendance at the events that have already happened this year has been greatly improved, we hope that in the ‘big weeks’ to come, the same sort of turn out will occur,” she said. “It’s amazing what the small but mighty Saint Mary’s community can do when we collaborate and come together to unite behind certain causes and events.”
Contact Kelly Konya at kkonya01@smaltnys.edu
**DEPARTMENT REVIEWS**

The Observer evaluated every department within Notre Dame’s and Saint Mary’s student governments. The departments within Notre Dame student government are highlighted in blue and gold. Our analyses of Saint Mary’s boards are featured in dark and light blue.

### DEPARTMENT of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

The Department focused on ND Creates, it hosted Photoshop workshops and passed a resolution through Senate for more individual study spaces on campus. The department is working on Majors Night, an art and drink night for students and a student-professor coffee initiative next semester. Painting, photography and technology classes are scheduled for the future. While the department has ambitious plans for the future, it must put more of those plans into action.

### ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVE

The Athletics Representative, sophomore Corey Robinson, worked with the football team’s Unity Council to reintroduce the alma mater policy at football games. In a video, Robinson encouraged respect during the senior day marshmallow fight. The Athletic Department also plans to participate in 29 for 29 and help with the “It’s On Us” sexual assault campaign. Robinson made some strongly-supported decisions, but video failed to achieve widespread student notice.

### CAMPUS MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVE

Campus Ministry and representative senior Grace Carroll held events for freshmen, Housekeeping Appreciation Week in each dorm. The group worked with class councils to organize mass and Grotto trips, was involved in reversing the alma mater decision and worked to address sexual assault with education campaigns and support systems. Campus Ministry receives an A for its strong kick-off to the year with the freshman class and continued work with clubs.

### DEPARTMENT of COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The department planned an on-campus farmer’s market with local vendors. It is working on the 29 for 29 initiative, a residence hall peer advisors program and the sorority day with the Zahm Celibates. Chant at football games moved to Hall Presidents’ Council and Senate for further consideration. Freshmen focus groups to discussed mental health and considered initiatives of freshmen mentors in dorms. FUEL still has much to do in order to implement future plans.

### DEPARTMENT of CONSTITUENT SERVICES

The group helped in the O’SNAP initiative and started Late Night Breakfast, a new program in conjunction with Irish State of Mind Mental Health Awareness Week. Future plans include standardizing and monitoring South Bend taxi companies. They also plan to install a reusable bags program for students to use for grab-n-go meals. The department receives its grade for a well-organized mental health campaign and its continued dedication to improvement.

### DEPARTMENT of CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY

The department examined the printing quota system, helped classes on O’SNAP module on the ND mobile app, trained OIT student employees, helped organize the ND Mobile Conference and collected feedback on DART policies. It hopes to install more mobile charging stations next semester. While the department has ambitious plans for the future, it must put more of those plans into action.

### DEPARTMENT of GENDER RELATIONS

The Gender Relations Department reported data on nighttime sexual assaults and submitted a proposal to support O’SNAP. The department co-sponsored the “Are You Getting the Signal?” event to educate students on sexual consent. The department also co-hosted the Time to Heal Dinner. The department also decided to advance the “It’s On Us” campaign on sexual assault, which will kick off in January. A “Love Your Body” campaign is scheduled for the spring.

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### DEPARTMENT of NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT and OUTREACH

The department implemented Political Brew. It also started Press Clips, an email system to provide daily news stories to all members of student government. The department recently met with leaders of Southern Methodist University to discuss their plans for their new student center and receive input from ND student leaders. The department is graded on its success in achieving its goals and implementing new initiative.

### DEPARTMENT of UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

The department of UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS participated in the SafeWalk revision revision and the revision of the financial structure of The Shirt Project. The department also passed resolutions on references to the Office of Community Standards and increases in study spaces in academic buildings. In the future it plans to update passages in the constitution. The department has ambitious plans for the future, it must put more of those plans into action.

### SMC STUDENT ACTIVITIES BOARD

This semester, the Saint Mary’s Activity Board (SAB) has been working to bolster participation. By allocating their budget differently, the department has reached many of their goals in advertising and attendance. SAB has already hosted many successful events on the 14th annual kick off to the year with the freshman class and continued work with clubs.

### SMC STUDENT DIVERSITY BOARD

Saint Mary’s Student Diversity Board (SDB) successfully hosted the annual SDB Diversity Banquet, SHINE Day, the Oxfam Hunger Banquet and Diversity Dinners that brought the tri-campus community together. SDB will focus their efforts on the following initiatives: Student Diversity Board, Women’s Leadership Day and Watch Your Mouth Day. The board has many ambitious goals but will need to better advertise and inspire attendance to accomplish their goals.

### SMC RESIDENCE HALL ASSOCIATION

Saint Mary’s Residence Hall Association (RHA) hosted its biggest event, Spirit Week, as well as Christmas Cards with College President Carol Ann Mooney, which featured crafts, food and decorations and was well-attended. In the future, RHA will hold the MA-School Formal in January, as well as Little Sister Weekend in March. The department grade is a B+ for its work thus far, since the group could be a bigger presence on campus and plan more events to better link the residence halls and SMC student body.

### SMC COUNCIL of CLUBS

This year, the Saint Mary’s Council of Clubs has worked to improve transparency and be more prudent in their allocation process. The group, headed by senior Marissa Pie’, crafted a workable budget and increased sponsorship allotment by 20 percent. Pie’ also hosted three mandatory seminars to guide student leaders through the budget request process. They plan to re-work the finance bylaws to make protocol and policy more transparent for the future. All of these initiatives earn the council an A.