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Student Government

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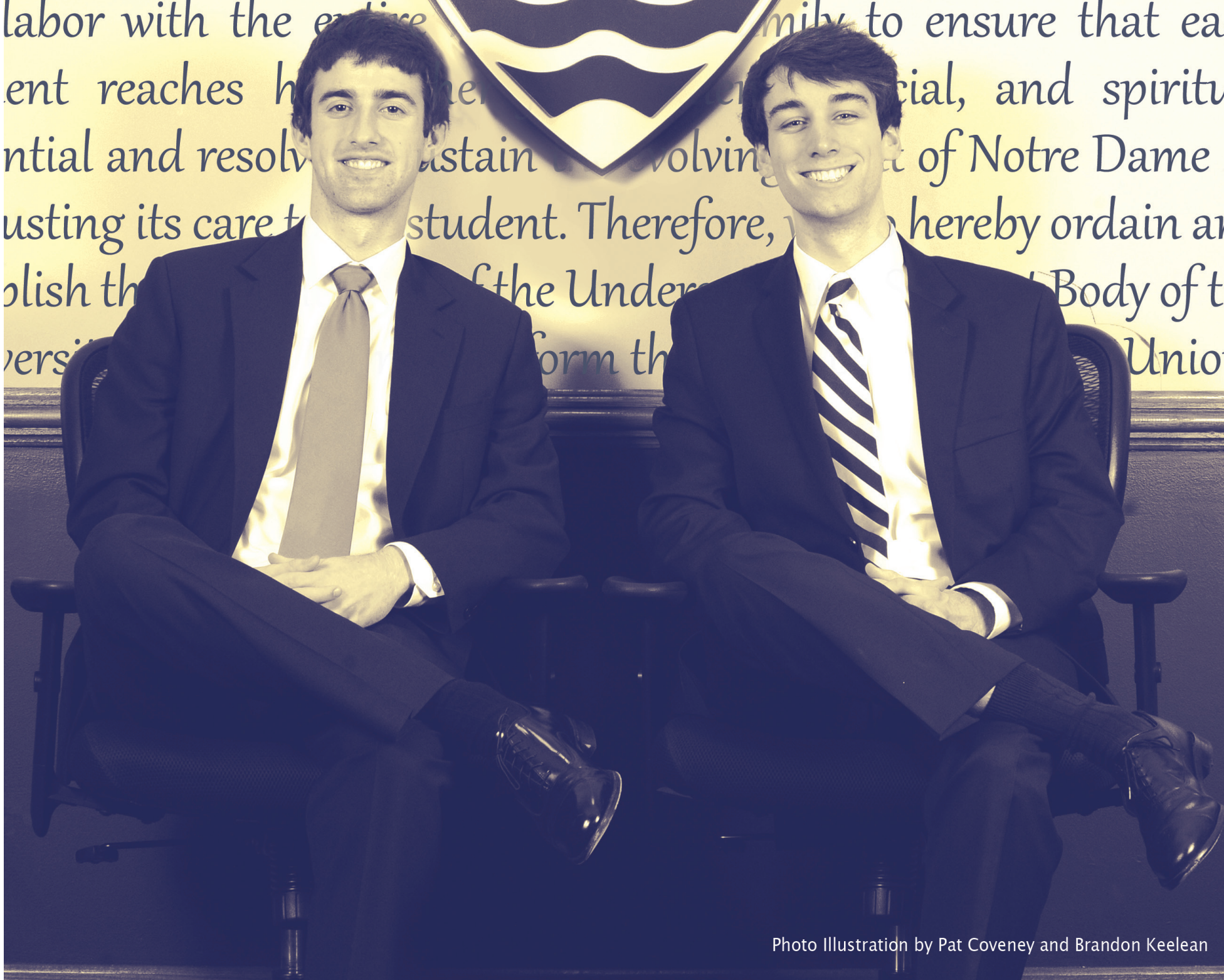


Photo Illustration by Pat Coveney and Brandon Keelean

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Initiatives rearrange student government

Creation of Constituent Services, merger between COR and Senate set tone for change



SUZANNA PRATT/The Observer

Athletic director Jack Swarbrick addresses an Oct. 13 meeting of the Student Senate. Next semester, eight new members will join the group when the Council of Representatives dissolves and merges with Senate.

By MEGAN DOYLE
News Editor

The outside of the student government office on the second floor of the LaFortune Student Center looks the same as always. But adjustments inside that office have changed student government's appearance from the inside in dramatic ways this semester.

Student body president Pat McCormick has led several projects throughout his administration so far that changed the structure of student government. The changes were McCormick's attempt to better address the problems that matter both day-to-day and on a larger scale.

"I'm very proud of the record that our team had put together, and it has been the team, around trying to advance these issues simultaneously, both issues of convenience and issues of consequence," McCormick said.

'Issues of convenience'

McCormick attempted to connect to the day-to-day lives of students specifically through the creation of the Department of Constituent Services in April.

"What we wanted to try and do was to create a committee whose sole job it was going to be driven by the voices of students whenever they spoke," McCormick said. "I think architecturally that was a critical move."

Director Heather Eaton said the new department serves primarily as a gathering place for student opinions.

"Constituent services is really meant to make sure that what we're doing are the things students want, and we want to make sure students know that they can always talk to us and voice their concerns or what they would like brought up," she said.

Eaton stepped into her role as the department's chair with some uncertainty.

"Because it was a new role ... at first, I'm not sure everyone had a clear idea of exactly the purpose I was going to serve," Eaton said. "That was probably what took the longest time, figuring out how I fit in and what I was exactly responsible for, but now that I've gotten there, the Constituent Services committee has been a great help to all the other committees in helping them plan for their year."

Eaton said students can submit their complaints about day-to-day life at Notre Dame to her group.

"I know I have a lot of complaints, and I go through the list, and I'm like, 'Amen! That bothers me too,'" Eaton said. "You kind of think about it, but when the moment that's inconvenient passes, you forget about it."

Constituent Services collected over 900 responses to a December survey. Eaton said this feedback allows the group to act on the student body's ideas.

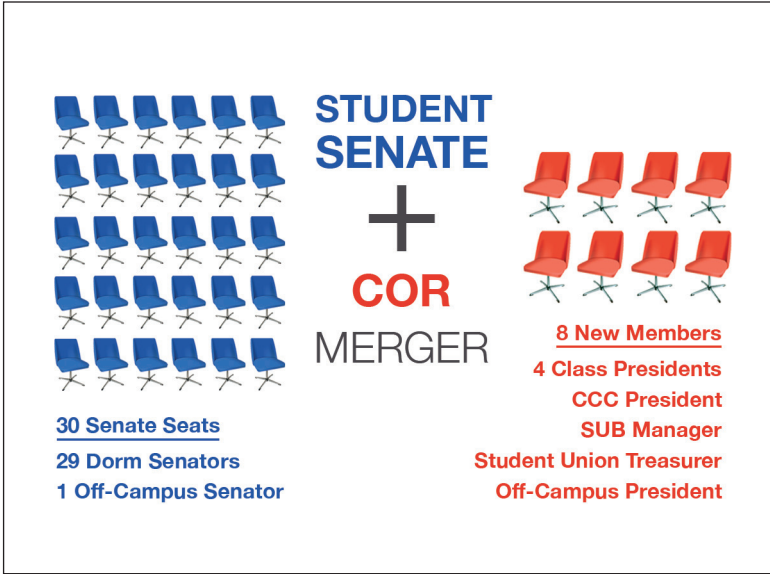
"We asked what people wanted to see sold at the Huddle, and our department actually started working on that," Eaton said.

The survey resulted in discussions with the Huddle staff, Eaton said, and students will soon see 24-packs of water bottles and more visible price tags on the shelves.

Eaton also organized Hall Council visits from the student body president, vice president and chief-of-staff.

"It was just an opportunity for them to meet students and become more of a familiar face so people feel comfortable getting in contact with them," she said.

While the department has been successful collecting student feedback and addressing small concerns, Eaton said cutting through red tape in the



LISA HOEYNCK/The Observer

administration could still be a problem.

"I'm not sure necessarily that we have had a big impact on administration and making changes that allowed for us to do differently that other student government administrations," she said.

'Issues of consequence'

The most dramatic change for student government organization this semester occurred in the semester's 11th hour. Student Senate passed a 13-page resolution during its last meeting of the semester that resulted in a merger between the Council of Representatives (COR) and Senate.

The Department of Internal Affairs led the fusion between the groups and wrote the constitutional reforms that made their fusion official. Department members Ben Noe and Paige Becker pushed the changes forward through the process.

"We realized more and more, perhaps the role of the Council of Representatives was created to fill was not being fulfilled, possibly even couldn't be fulfilled the way it was currently set up," Becker said.

Becker said some people struggled to admit COR could be obsolete or inefficient.

"There were occasionally places where we would run into the perspective that this is the way it's always been," she said.

With the new resolution, Senate morphed into a new body that McCormick said better represents the student body. However, the new Senate is currently untested and next semester will reveal how effective the change is for the group.

As the office plans more organizations, Noe said he hopes everyone will continue to cooperate.

"I think the majority in general is in favor of change, but I think there is also going to be going a small but vocal minority opposing some changes, just in general," Noe said. "I know there are some people that are not entirely satisfied with the changes made here, and I would hope that those people don't use that bitterness or that irritation with this change to hurt future changes that could help student government."

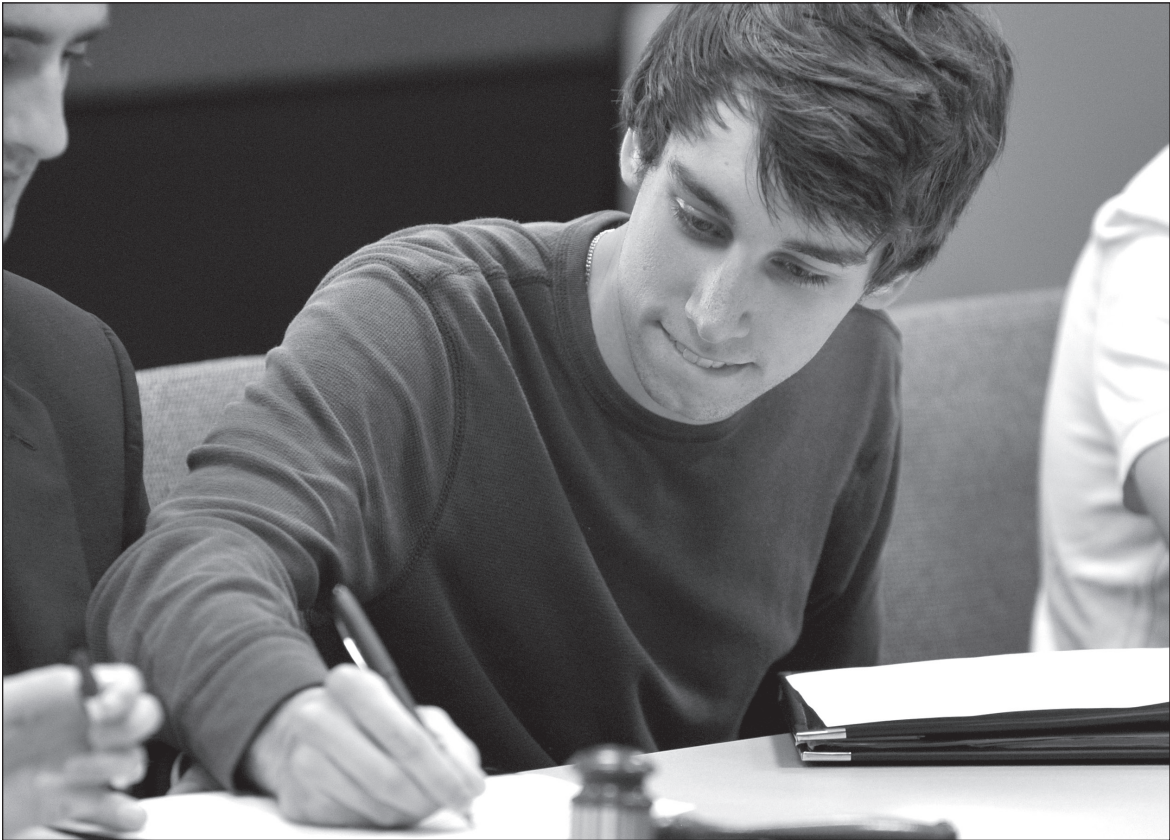
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Editor's Note: The Observer is publishing a comprehensive review of the Notre Dame and Saint Mary's student governments. This issue is intended to illustrate for students what elected officials are doing in their name, so they can enter the election season fully informed. Its intent is to provide an illuminating, unbiased assessment of the state of the Student Union.

OFFICE OF THE STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

Administration works to fulfill campaign goals

McCormick, Rocheleau strive to achieve lofty ambitions, balance day-to-day concerns with larger projects



MIKE FERNANDES/The Observer

Student body president Pat McCormick takes notes during a Sept. 22 meeting of Student Senate. The senior is visiting all residence halls during Hall Council to talk about student complaints.



MIKE FERNANDES/The Observer

Vice president Brett Rocheleau smiles candidly during a Sept. 22 meeting of Student Senate.

By MEGAN DOYLE
News Editor

Thirty-two pages. That was the length of the campaign platform that Pat McCormick and Brett Rocheleau outlined during the spring student body elections. The document, titled “Hope in Action,” detailed major promises for the team to fulfill when they stepped into their positions in April, but they insisted their platform was feasible. Since April, McCormick and Rocheleau have accomplished only some of their goals, while others remain abstract.

Playing 4 Peace

The first and most ambitious goal in the duo’s platform was to “make Notre Dame the premier forum for nationally-recognized events uniting athletes, entertainers and policy-makers of behalf of social justice.” This semester, McCormick’s administration has continued and developed its Playing 4 Peace movement that combines Notre Dame athletics with peace efforts in Sudan. “The athletics department as a result of Playing 4 Peace has also invested ... professional staff support into Playing 4 Peace, which was originally just a project between two athletic teams, student government and social concerns through [the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies],” McCormick said. The fledgling project now hosts regular events, like a soccer tournament earlier this fall, that are well attended by both students and local community members. However, McCormick’s campaign touted his plans for a large charity concert in Notre Dame Stadium, which has been relatively unspoken of this semester. McCormick still promised the concert is in the works in student government. “While there is still work to be done, I am very excited about what is going to happen

in January and February of this year,” McCormick said.

Fighting for quarter dogs

Another major item on the McCormick-Rocheleau platform was their plan to expand student government’s capacity to work with constituent services. “It must also be the case that we not only deliver on issues of a more routine nature, but that we do so even more passionately,” McCormick said. “I think substantively what that looks like is that on midnight of transition, quarter dogs were restored.” McCormick and Rocheleau did this by the newly created Department of Constituent Services, chaired by sophomore Heather Eaton. The new department extended the previous administration’s tradition of “Whine Week” into “Whine Wednesdays,” and Eaton collected student opinion via surveys and an online suggestion box. McCormick and Rocheleau visit Hall Councils in different dorms each week as well. “We’ve been trying to update dorm by dorm on the progress we’re trying to make in building a new student government this year,” McCormick said. Rocheleau said he feels these conversations with students and the work in Constituent Services connects to the complaints students have each day. “It becomes rewarding when I feel like it actually makes a difference, and I enjoy seeing the difference it can make,” Rocheleau said. Concrete progress — quarter dogs and Puppy Days, for example — have come out of this administration and its constituent

services projects so far.

Taxi reform

Student safety both on and off campus was another priority for this administration, and McCormick said he has tried to develop the strong relationships the previous administration built with local officials and law enforcement. “The relationship has been continued to be developed and deepened,” McCormick said. “For the first time, the Safety Summit took place right here on campus on Irish Green.” The Safety Summit in August was hosted at the Robinson Community Learning Center in South Bend in the past. Student met with local police and leaders to talk about how to live safely in South Bend. Outside of engaging with local law enforcement, McCormick said his administration contributed to city taxi reforms that will protect students in the future. “These were cases where sometimes student safety was being jeopardized, cases where students were being gauged in terms of their prices,” McCormick said. “What we ended up being able to come up with is something that ultimately emphasizes now a predictable cost structure and accountability on the part of the taxi companies that students know their rights.” However, the city of South Bend compiled these reforms long before McCormick’s administration began and McCormick’s role was primarily to support the project. Additionally, students have little input in the reforms themselves.

Unaddressed issues

Highlighted in the 32-page platform is also the promise to “enable students to customize our curriculum.” The University’s curriculum has been a non-issue in the administration’s major projects thus far, and it lies dormant with several other details in the “Hope in Action” blueprint.

The administration’s final promise in its campaign was its most vague — to “amplify student voices in charting a course for the Notre Dame project.” The promise to “amplify student voices” has seen some concrete results as the administration tries to include the student body in larger conversations. McCormick and many sustainability clubs on campus participated in conversations surrounding the University’s recent comprehensive sustainability strategy. However, these conversations began in the Office of Sustainability in 2008, and McCormick’s involvement only began this summer when the plan was in its final stages. Overall, it is commendable that McCormick and Rocheleau set a high bar for their administration and have made strides toward achieving even the most ambitious goals. However, the student body has yet to see the monumental vision that the duo campaigned on come to fruition. Next, the administration should target its energy into a few actionable projects to leave its legacy on the student body.

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Grade: B+

McCormick and Rocheleau campaigned on ambitious goals and a sweeping vision of change in student government. While the team has accomplished some of its promises, the two have not met the bar they set for themselves when they assumed their positions in April. Their dedication and energy have produced some results, but their initiatives have not gone above and beyond the norm as anticipated. The duo should narrow the focus of their efforts to achieve lasting and tangible results in a few of their projects.

STUDENT SENATE

Group debates, approves merger

By MEL FLANAGAN
News Writer

Student Senate has focused its term on improving the structure of student government by approving several constitutional amendments to increase clarity and efficiency within the organization. Senate passed 14 resolutions throughout a semester that culminated in the merger resolution that combined Senate with the Council of Representatives (COR). Student body vice president Brett Rocheleau, who chairs the Student Senate, said the senators engaged in a lively debate prior to the resolution being passed. “It was a major lift on the constitution, and there was a great debate about it,” Rocheleau said. “The senators felt free to speak out. It was nice to hear a lot of discussion and not just one side. It was good that everyone was able to hear the different views.” The resolution dissolved COR and added six new voting members to Senate. Rocheleau said it was the result of months of effort by Director of Internal Affairs Ben Noe, his committee and the subcommittee on constitutional reform. “I was glad it ended up passing,” Rocheleau said. “I think it will really help future Senate meetings with more discussion based topics. I hope next semester will be more fruitful and effective because student government is more streamlined.” The senators cooperated well throughout debate about the resolution and the changes to student government. “We had an initial document and it changed several times from senators and people on committees talking it out and giving their insight,” he said. With the merger approved, Rocheleau and McCormick hold high hopes for next semester. “Senate will be more discussion based, without the department directors giving reports,” Rocheleau said. “I hope this will make senators feel more involved and take on more of the projects we’re working on.”

This resolution was just one of several focused on constitutional amendments for greater clarity between what the constitution says and how student government actually operates, Rocheleau said. In one resolution, Noe and the Department of Internal Affairs planned several reforms to the election process. The department drafted the resolution after Mike Thomas, former vice president for elections, suggested changes to the process. “That resolution was meant to ease the process of elections after we ran into some problems during last year’s election,” Rocheleau said. Student Senate also passed a major resolution on the University’s comprehensive sustainability agreement. “The agreement is part of a major initiative we’ve been working on over the past decade,” Rocheleau said. “Now we have a firm carbon commitment and a plan of action. Having students involved in that was great.” In addition, Senate approved resolutions for tangible changes to Notre Dame, such as a safety resolution to add a Blue Light Phone at the intersection of Twyckenham Drive and Courtney Lane, and a resolution for the improvement of Riehle and McGlinn Fields. The resolution for the improvement of Riehle and McGlinn Fields proposed adding field lights and installing turf in some places, Rocheleau said. Senate passed a similar resolution a few years ago, he said, but the University has not taken action on the matter yet. “It was passed two or three years ago and has just been sitting on a desk since,” Rocheleau said. “Hopefully now there will be actions to improve the fields with more lighting and better grass.” For many senators, participating in the group is a first taste of student government. While these younger students lack experience, Rocheleau said their eagerness to participate is why the group is able to be so effective. “Because most of them are young, you’re afraid they won’t

speak up or add to the discussion,” he said. “But no one is shy to give their opinion which is necessary in student government.” The senators assist Rocheleau and student body president Pat McCormick by providing feedback on the pair’s goals for their term. “They’ve done an amazing job of giving us a soundboard, a place to bounce our ideas off of and improve our ideas,” he said. “[Pat and I] are just two people who have a vision but we need other people to help us in our vision.” Next semester, Rocheleau said the group will have one major discussion topic each meeting that will hopefully lead to a resolution that can be voted on at the beginning of the next meeting. One topic on Senate’s agenda for next semester is the possibility of students using Domer Dollars at off-campus locations. “I know previous administrations have tried but now we’re taking a slightly different angle and hoping it works out,” Rocheleau said. “We don’t know if it’s feasible but we’re optimistic about it.” Rocheleau said he also hopes to discuss other constituent matters such as Food Services and more lighting around campus. “[Next semester] we’ll be able to hear better advice and ideas,” he said. “That’s what I’m really hoping for, better discussion to make resolutions and hopefully be more effective than we were this semester.”

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Grade: B+

Student Senate debated and approved resolutions that restructured student government to increase its transparency and effectiveness. While these constitutional amendments are important, Senate did not spend much time on matters that tangibly affect the student body.

Student Government Department Grades

- Academic Affairs A
Director Neal Ravindra led the Department of Academic Affairs in making large strides on the issues of 24-hour study spaces around campus and the online syllabus database. Academic Affairs also held a very successful Last Lecture featuring Carolyn Woo, dean of the College of Business, and two Coffee and Conversation events where students could gather to discuss current events. In the future, the department needs to deliver on other promises such as creating a more formalized process for students creating a major/minor and providing students with an accessible map of study spaces.
- Campus Technology B
The Department of Campus Technology worked toward implementing technology commissioners in dorms and reforming the Office of Information and Technology (OIT) section of freshman orientation. Director Yiting Zheng also examined campus study spaces and assisted the University in its plan to switch course management systems. Despite this work, no concrete achievements have been reached, and the department needs follow through on the projects it has been working on.
- Community Relations A
The Department of Community Relations held several successful events, including the Fall Festival, a Back-to-School picnic at the Robinson Community Learning Center and the Bus Tour of South Bend. Director Erika Hansen also established monthly meetings with the student governments of surrounding colleges to discuss shared concerns. The groups have collaborated on projects such as the Christmas Carnival and College Prep Education Initiative.
- Constituent Services B+
The newly created Department of Constituent Services garnered student feedback on a variety of issues, including Grab & Go options, products sold in The Huddle and nutritional information in the dining halls. In addition, Director Heather Eaton organized two Whine Wednesdays, the first-ever Puppy Days event and Hall Council visits from the student body president, vice president and chief-of-staff. In the future, Eaton needs to use the information her department has collected to deliver on student requests.
- Gender Issues B
Since the Department of Gender Issues transferred leadership in November, the department co-sponsored Sexual Assault Awareness Week and worked with the “4 to 5 Movement” to increase support for gay rights on campus. Director Katie Rose intends to hold a lecture on relationships as well as a Body Image Awareness Week in the spring. Following a semester of heightened reports of sexual assault, the department needs to facilitate more of a discussion on these issues at Notre Dame.
- Internal Affairs A
Director Ben Noe, with the help of the Subcommittee on Constitutional Reform chaired by Paige Becker, drafted several amendments to the constitution. The Department of Internal Affairs tackled issues such as election reform, quorum for Senate meetings and the process for removing and appointing department directors. Most recently, the department presented a resolution to combine Senate with the Council of Representatives in order to transform student government into a more streamlined and effective body.
- Multicultural Affairs B
The Department of Multicultural Affairs restructured the Student Diversity Council, with the goal of greater collaboration between student government and the cultural and ethnic student clubs on campus. Despite this action, the department has not sponsored any multicultural events or education programs for students. Director Nick Ochoa needs to attract greater attention to multicultural issues on campus, especially in light of recent accusations of racial prejudices on campus.
- Off-Campus Concerns A
Director Katy Zemlock improved the late-night TRANSPO route by increasing the number of buses serving the route and working to publicize the new pick-up times. The Department of Off Campus Concerns also hosted a Lease Fair for students and continued to attract more vendors to its Students for South Bend Discount Program. Zemlock plans to explore the possibilities of providing legal services for students and the use of Domer Dollars at off-campus venues.
- Residence Life B+
The Department of Residence Life examined many crucial student issues, such as dining hall nutritional information, Residence Life reviews and Food Services’ campus cafes. Although they have collected a great deal information on the subjects, the department has not yet taken action to improve any of these aspects of student life. Director John Sanders needs to work toward more concrete results of his department’s efforts in the areas of Food Services and residence hall issues.
- Social Concerns A
The Department of Social Concerns successfully hosted the first campus-wide Housekeeper Appreciation Day and organized dorm discussion events following the Sept. 11th Memorial Mass, which they played an essential role in. Director Ellen Carroll also continued the Playing For Peace initiative with soccer and basketball tournaments, a peace rally and a discussion on recent peacekeeping efforts in Sudan. Carroll plans to hold events in the spring raising awareness for immigration reform, the fight against the death penalty and Invisible Children.
- University Affairs B
Director Jason Lovell led the Department of University Affairs through the completion of the DeBartolo Hall lounge renovation. However, Lovell has encountered many setbacks regarding the possibility of installing a Redbox or other movie-rental kiosk on campus, a project that has been discussed in the department since last year’s administration. The department needs to follow through on more of its plans next semester, especially the upcoming contract expirations of several restaurants in the LaFortune Student Center.

STUDENT UNION BOARD

Members lead focus groups to gather student feedback

By MARISA IATI
News Writer

The Student Union Board (SUB) aimed to improve its outreach, engagement and involvement initiatives this semester, SUB board manager Joe Caparros said. “[SUB has] been doing a lot of outreach this year,” Caparros said. “That’s probably been our biggest program, reaching out to other organizations. These other organizations are passionate about [their programs], and when you team up with SUB, it just produces great events.” For the first time, SUB collaborated with the Student Activities Office (SAO) to produce Comedy on the Quad in September, Caparros said. The comedy show was one of SUB’s most successful events this semester. “That had numbers that matched with regular concert numbers, so Gabriel Iglesias was

a big hit,” Caparros said. “Other big events were [the] Macklemore [concert at Legends in November], which reached over 700 people coming in and out. Best of Acousticafe in the LaFortune Ballroom [in October] was really great.” SUB tried to respond better to student feedback and improve its advertising, Caparros said. “We have a website where we can really listen to people,” Caparros said. “It’s all linked to Facebook and Twitter. We’ve heard that people have wanted bigger advertising. With the Michigan State [football ticket] lottery, we had trouble making sure that every student was advertised to, and that’s definitely something we’ll improve on in the future.” In order to gather student feedback, Caparros said SUB implemented focus groups in 21 out of 29 total residence halls. The initiative began last spring, he said, and SUB will continue it next semester.

“Sometimes our director of publicity would go to [certain residence halls] and there would be no one there [for previously scheduled focus groups], and that was kind of disheartening, but I feel like the few that we got were really constructive,” Caparros said. Caparros said SUB used the focus groups to ask students what musical genres they prefer for SUB’s spring concert and seek feedback about its movie screenings. “People were asking about having a matinee time, and I love that idea, and I love that we were able to get that from focus groups, so we’re actually having earlier times in the spring to facilitate that,” Caparros said. SUB representatives in residence halls also asked weekly questions to collect students’ opinions, Caparros said, but this initiative was only partly successful due to lack of participation. When SAO restructured this

semester, Caparros said SUB adjusted well to its new staff advisor, program coordinator Joshua Wilson. “I think we did well, and I think we can even improve more on those relationships [with SAO] in the future,” he said. SUB intends to host more events in the spring, Caparros said. “We had 39 events this year [so far], and with more weekends available because it’s not football season, we’re going to produce more events and improve the quality,” he said. “The two big ones to look out for are the concerts and AnTostal.” Caparros said he also hopes to produce more alternative forms of marketing. “I’m really pushing the involvement initiative, really pushing the dorm reps,” he said. “They’re really excited, and I’m trying to facilitate that even more.”

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Grade: A

SUB hosted popular events for the student body, such as the Macklemore concert and Comedy on the Quad. The group also made strides toward increasing advertising and encouraging student feedback, but SUB still struggles to gauge campus opinion through its dorm representatives.

COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES

COR dissolves, transfers some members to Senate

By JOHN CAMERON
News Writer

The Council of Representatives (COR), a diverse advisory group to student body president Pat McCormick, focused its discussions this semester on three primary goals outlined by McCormick in his “State of the Student Union” address.

“The first pillar is uniting the Student Union to make it a more effective advocate, the second, delivering on constituent services and ... [third,] dramatically extending student government’s ability to work on issues of consequence,” McCormick said.

This semester was the group’s last as the COR’s last and most significant topic of debate resulted in its consolidation with the Student Senate.

“There was something of a contradiction in COR,” McCormick said. “There was the sense that these members of the Student Union should advise the president on student policy and programming. But while we allow them to advise on policy, there was no architecture within student government to let them engage in policy terms.”

McCormick said the group’s debates focused on how to expand representativeness in student government.

“We tried to think through whether there might be a way to accomplish two objectives,” he said. “First, to cut through the red tape in student government that had increasingly come to be extraneous to the work of the Student Union itself, and secondly, to see whether there might be a way in doing so to unite the Student Union once and for all.”

Following several months of revisions to the constitution led by COR member and Internal Affairs chair Ben Noe, the Council debated the merger for two weeks before holding a trial meeting with Senate. The senators approved the reform at that meeting last week.

Before the merger, the Council did also address the second pillar, which McCormick refers to as “issues of convenience.”

Council debate resulted in clarifying policies regarding student use of local taxi services, McCormick said.

“We were excited to have the opportunity to discuss taxi reform and to get people’s feedback on

transportation in general,” he said. “Providing more effective transportation to and from campus is routine, but important.”

McCormick said the group’s conversations often centered on enhancing school spirit, and Notre Dame leprechaun Mike George even attended one meeting.

“I extended that invitation [to George] in order to bring stakeholders together to talk about focusing on both student safety and school spirit,” he said. “We used COR to talk about stadium modernization and things like canned music.”

McCormick said the group was helpful in his efforts to gauge student sentiment on the controversial game day updates.

“COR serves as a sounding board to get a feel about where students stand,” he said.

The Council’s final area of focus this semester, McCormick said, were “issues of consequence” relating to both University and external policy matters.

“We talked about the education Forum, to discuss what worked in past years and how the Forum can be improved,” he said. “We talked about immigration reform in COR before Cardinal Mahoney came to speak at Senate, where we had the opportunity to bring in ideas from COR.”

One of the most tangible results of dialogue in COR, McCormick said, was the passage of a comprehensive sustainability strategy by the University.

“We had the chance to talk about sustainability, which contributed to my own approach toward working for a sustainability strategy at Senate, which resulted in our fourth resolution,” he said. “That was followed up with a report to the Board of Trustees, and now we have, for the first time in Notre Dame history, a public commitment to sustainability.”

McCormick said the group’s greatest purpose this semester was to advance students’ role in policy change.

“[The representatives] embody why the argument is so important, that students can be part of the project of building a Notre Dame consistent with the size of our hopes for the University,” he said.

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Grade: A

Conversations in the Council of Representatives (COR) produced few immediate or tangible results. While the group did support reform on taxis and pep rallies, most of its other suggestions were geared toward long-term projects. However,

the group covered a wide range of topics in its discussion and effectively fulfilled its role as an advisory board for the student body president. The group will dissolve next semester and pass only some of its members to Student Senate, but many of this semester’s suggestions will impact projects that will outlive COR itself.



TOM YOUNG/The Observer

From left, student body president Pat McCormick, vice president Brett Rocheleau, parliamentarian Michael Masi and secretary Katie Baker listen during an Aug. 31 meeting of COR.



JAMES DOAN/The Observer

From left, junior class president Kevin Doherty, senior class president Anne Huntington and freshman class president Tim Scanlon will now be a part of Student Senate after COR’s dissolution.

FACULTY SENATE

Professors debate classroom policies, disability services

By NICOLE TOCZAUER
News Writer

Student behavior during class, disability services and a new master’s program sparked debate in Faculty Senate this semester, chair Morten Eskildsen said.

Eskildsen said the group acts as a voice for faculty interests on campus.

“We work in two ways — first as a reactionary to initiatives, proposals or anything that changes across campus that would affect faculty and secondly as a proactive group to address issues we feel could be improved,” Eskildsen said.

Faculty Senate met only twice this semester due to the death of former chair J. Keith Rigby, Jr., Eskildsen said. Rigby, an associate professor of civil engineering and geological sciences, died Nov. 5.

Eskildsen said he cancelled the group’s November meeting in hon-

or of Rigby. Generally the Faculty Senate meets once every month.

Within the Senate are four committees — Academic Affairs, Administrative Affairs, Benefits and Student Affairs. Two students also sit on Faculty Senate as non-voting members. Ellen Childs represented graduate students, and student body vice president Brett Rocheleau spoke for undergraduates.

The faculty representatives discussed disruptive student behavior during its meetings this semester. Eskildsen said the use of cell phones and laptops during class concerns some faculty members.

Some professors also expressed frustration with tardiness and students who left during class, he said.

“The first thing is then to do some fact finding and find out to which degree this is a real issue,” Eskildsen said. “Some people have expressed this concern on one committee, but it doesn’t necessar-

ily mean it’s widespread.”

Rocheleau said he hoped to work with the committee to solve any issues professors had with students’ behavior in class.

“Talk about it and tell us,” Rocheleau said. “If a professor puts it in a syllabus, we know. Some professors agree with some points [on student behavior] but I don’t see how anything would be achieved by a study, which some faculty want to do.”

The student representatives made a list of seven initiatives that could possibly improve student-faculty relations, Rocheleau said.

The seven initiatives included developing graduate student committees, improved graduate housing, reform in graduate health care, provision of teaching opportunities to graduate students, achieving balance in faculty’s academic and home lives, the creation of an online syllabus database and

updating disability services.

Disability services have been a large topic of discussion in the group this semester, Rocheleau said.

Eskildsen said the Faculty Senate worried the services did not fulfill the needs of those students.

“We have an office that provides services for anyone with a physical or learning disability, but it would seem it is understaffed,” Eskildsen said. “Some teachers even take it on themselves and go way beyond what preparation for class should be to help remove obstacles in their way.”

Another item on the Senate’s agenda has been a proposal for a master’s degree in Patent Law, which would be a part of the College of Science.

“The Faculty Senate is asked for input when new programs are proposed,” he said. “The Academic Affairs Committee is looking into

this one.”

In addition to these issues, the Faculty Senate also planned to reassess faculty benefits, Eskildsen said.

“Hopefully in our [next] meeting, [director of compensation and benefits] Denise Murphy will brief us on some of the latest developments relating to retirement savings and those programs,” he said. “The Committee on Benefits monitors what is going on and advocates for the faculty.”

No matter the topic of discussion, Eskildsen said the main goal of the group this semester was to resolve issues on behalf of the faculty.

“We try not to just point out problems, though it is necessary,” he said. “We want to offer constructive solutions as to how things could improve.”

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CAMPUS LIFE COUNCIL

Group works on safety, inclusion

Delayed start prevents council from concrete accomplishments



KARLA MORENO/The Observer

From left, student body chief of staff Claire Sokas, president Pat McCormick, vice president Brett Rocheleau and parliamentarian Michael Masi lead a CLC meeting this fall.

By EMILY SCHRANK
News Writer

Although the Campus Life Council (CLC) did not begin meeting until October, student body president Pat McCormick said he hopes this year's group can make meaningful recommendations on how to improve the University.

"CLC is a group that actually meets at the request of the Board of Trustees and in some ways, it is slightly distinct from the work we do as an administration," McCormick said. "It's an opportunity for a forum, where students can come together with rectors and faculty members to discuss ways to tangibly improve campus life."

CLC did not begin meeting until October because the group did not receive rector recommendations from Vice President for Student Affairs Fr. Tom Doyle until that time.

Once the student and rector representatives were able to convene, McCormick said the group identified three main areas that they would like to work on — student safety, expanding inclusion and student activities.

CLC members have divided into three subcommittees based on these priorities. The

subcommittees meet bi-weekly.

The subcommittee on student safety hopes to bring together experts to discuss how to improve campus safety, McCormick said.

"The major thing we're recommending right now is more lighting on campus," McCormick said. "Especially in places like Mod Quad, where there maybe isn't as much [lighting] as there could be."

McCormick said the goal of the subcommittee on expanding inclusion is to enable all students "to serve as partners in the project at Notre Dame."

"Students have a unique role in charting the course for Notre Dame," he said. "They are ready and willing to serve as partners, but that requires mutual respect from both staff and other students."

The expanding inclusion subcommittee has identified specific areas its members would like to address, McCormick said.

"One area they're looking at is underrepresented students and their faith traditions," he said. "Another is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) students and how we can further include them in the life of the University."

McCormick said the student

Grade: C

After a late start, CLC identified structured goals for improving University life, which if achieved, could benefit the student body. However, the group did not make productive use of the limited time it has been in session and a lot of work needs to be done next semester to accomplish goals and achieve tangible results.

activities subcommittee would make recommendations on both the process and the quality of student activities at Notre Dame, including improvements to SAO online and pep rallies, as well as the modernization of the football stadium.

McCormick said the hope for the year is to produce a report to the Board of Trustees and the vice president for Student Affairs detailing CLC's recommendations on improving these areas of life at Notre Dame.

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Government in brief

Graduate Student Union focuses on families

The Graduate Student Union (GSU) has achieved many of its goals for this semester, including a welcome back social held in Purcell Pavilion, a film screening and a blood drive, president Sam Rund said.

A major focus for the group this semester was its emphasis on graduate student family life.

"We donated all proceeds from our football concession stands to the pregnant and parenting student fund," Rund said.

Better health care for graduate student families is a growing need in the community, and Rund said the group would continue to look for solutions next semester.

"We are working with downtown South Bend to welcome new graduate students to the community," Rund said. "We want to continue to work with the University for better health care for grad student dependents."

-Adam Llorens

Board regulates undergrad student clubs

The Financial Management Board (FMB) continues to regulate the use of undergraduate student group funds and provide oversight for The Shirt project, president Eric Biro said.

The Board enforces rules outlined in the Student Union constitution about the way clubs can and cannot use their funds.

"Student business managers come in to present their financials," Biro said. "We have made everything more efficient and have become more effective in the role we are supposed to be filling."

Biro said FMB would continue to regulate student organizations next semester as closely as it has so far this year.

"We are going to continue our motive of upholding the fiscal policy of the Student Union," Biro said. "We are looking to get groups more aware of what we do."

-Adam Llorens

Club Coordination Council allocates funds

The Club Coordination Council (CCC) has worked this semester to make the fund allocation process run more smoothly for clubs, president Hannah Burke said.

"Last year, we developed a new spreadsheet that broke down the funding and helped to make it clear how much the clubs actually needed," Burke said. "This supports a more precise process where the clubs cover all the bases."

The Council has a winter and spring allocation process. The winter allocation gives money to clubs for unexpected costs not included in the previous year's budget, while during the spring allocation, clubs request funding for the following year's activities.

"The plan for spring semester is to see how the changes from the winter allocation can be incorporated into the spring semester's process," Burke said.

-Nicole Michels

Hall Presidents Council discusses pep rallies

This semester, Hall Presidents Council (HPC) encouraged student interest in pep rallies and worked to improve collaboration between dorms, co-chair Billy Wardlaw said.

Wardlaw said HPC tried to make sure all of the pep rallies were student-oriented and student-focused.

"One of our primary focuses early on was the USC pep rally," Wardlaw said. "We were happy to collaborate with other clubs, and student government on campus to work on the pep rallies to make them more effective."

The presidents met regularly to facilitate dorm events and to encourage collaboration between residence halls.

"These meetings tend to be conducive to a collaborative environment," Wardlaw said. "Everyone tends to get to know each other a little better because we try to create a really friendly environment."

-Nicole Michels

SENIOR CLASS COUNCIL

Senior Class Council (SCC) aimed to bring together different groups of seniors through its events this semester, senior class president Anne Huntington said.

"Our goal for this semester was to try to branch out to different parts of the senior class and try to find ways to cater to their needs," Huntington said. "We had a really good response and we were seeing seniors and meeting seniors that none of us knew before."

Huntington said SCC planned for 15 large-scale events this semester, and only two did not work out. Some of these bigger events included a senior class Mass and a "welcome back" barbeque with the Career Center.

Next semester, Huntington said the Council will spend most of its time planning Senior Week, but seniors should look forward to more big events, such as a Valentine's Day dance and transition seminars that will prepare seniors for life after graduation.

-Tori Roeck

JUNIOR CLASS COUNCIL

Apparel was the main focus for Junior Class Council (JCC) this semester.

"We really emphasized apparel this semester, which was a big part of our platform," junior class president Kevin Doherty said. "We've gotten bro tanks, pint glasses and a bunch of new stuff on order that should come in as soon as we get back."

The only apparel items for the Class of 2013 the past two years had been two T-shirts and sweatpants, and Doherty said this year's Council wanted to expand those options.

In addition to apparel, JCC sponsored Domecoming, a week full of events for the Class of 2013, Doherty said.

Doherty said the Council's goal for next semester is to entice more students to attend class events.

"One of the big challenges we had, especially as juniors, is having one-third of our class abroad at every point in the semester," Doherty said. "It kind of makes it difficult to reach out to the students that are here and get a bigger draw."

-Tori Roeck

SOPHOMORE CLASS COUNCIL

Sophomore class council (SCC) strived to create memorable experiences for students through programming this semester, president Nicholas Schilling said.

"Our primary goal was to put on events that when people look back on them next year, they're going to say, 'Remember when we went to that dance,'" Schilling said.

SCC hosted Domerfest 2.0, its largest event of the semester, at the end of September. Although Schilling said Domerfest 2.0 was the best event of the semester in terms of the quality of the music and lighting, student attendance did not meet expectations.

"Unfortunately we really didn't get quite the turnout we'd hoped for," Schilling said. "The dichotomy of programming is that the class council is able to provide a really good and professional event, but there's no saying if people will attend it or not."

Schilling said the Council will close the semester with a Grotto prayer service and glow-in-the-dark rosaries.

-Dan Brombach

FRESHMAN CLASS COUNCIL

Freshman class council (FCC) united the Class of 2015 through a series of different activities, president Tim Scanlon said.

FCC hosted a volleyball tournament, sold class shirts and planned a class Mass for the end of the semester. In addition, Scanlon said the Council organized the inaugural Monster Mash Halloween Dance, which he called the semester's most successful event.

"We had about 600 people show up to the dance, so that was a great way to start out class council," Scanlon said.

Next semester, Scanlon said FCC is planning a Valentine's Day Dance and hopes to pair with the Center for Social Concerns for a service opportunity. The council also hopes to create a freshmen-generated prayer book.

"For this book we're going to ask the freshmen to send in thoughts and prayers that they've had over the course of this year," Scanlon said.

-Dan Brombach

SAINT MARY’S STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

SMC leadership builds during ‘transition year’

Gans, Zupanic reorganize Student Government Association, work toward new structure next semester

By CAITLIN HOUSLEY
Saint Mary’s Editor

Learning, leading and listening have been and will continue to be the goals of what Saint Mary’s student body president and vice president have labeled the “transition year.”

President Nicole Gans and vice president Jacquelyn Zupancic began the year tweaking the Student Government Association’s (SGA) constitution and bylaws.

“This year [Nicole and I] felt as though we came into our positions ready to go and fired up,” Zupancic said. “Everyone had all these great things they wanted to do, and then we slowly started to realize that our time was being consumed with financial things, with different policies and mending the bylaws.”

After restructuring the Student Government Association (SGA), Gans and Zupancic researched how to make the board more effective. Recently, the voting members of SGA agreed to transition into a Student Senate structure that will be in full effect next school year.

“Next semester we will be working in an interim between the two structures, and we’re going to be working very closely with the Office of Student Involvement and the Multicultural Services (SIMS) to get our policies laid out, so for April first, the new board can start running on that,” Zupancic said.

The new structure will call

for student councils rather than student commissioners, thus opening new positions for greater student involvement, Gans said.

“[Restructuring SGA will] allow [for] even greater student input and more student representation,” she said. “That is the greatest change in our platform from last year.”

Zupancic is also happy with the changes, but said the board will have to work hard to keep the process moving.

“We definitely have our work cut out for us, and we want all of this to be in place as soon as possible,” she said.

However, Zupancic said the process has also been exciting.

“Our board is doing a great job of getting the word out there and still staying motivated through all these changes,” she said. “Everyone is very adaptable, and we’ve had a lot of positive feedback.”

“Everyone is very enthusiastic about the changes, and they want their opinions to be heard. It’s great. In our meetings, no one can stop talking about it.”

Gans and Zupancic said these “transition projects” have made them realize the many facets of leadership.

“[This semester], Nicole and I realized how long the path is to becoming leaders,” Zupancic said. “We’re still becoming leaders and still honing our leadership skills everyday because problems come up, and we have to exactly be on our ‘A’ game and problem-solve every day.”

For this reason, Zupancic and

president Nicole Gans began a monthly leadership program this semester.

“We wanted to create some sort of series that [teaches] students who may not be in leadership positions, who are aspiring to be in them or who are currently in them ... about the different components of leadership and how to motivate and organize different structures and focus on your goals,” Zupancic said.

The program started in November and will run through March. It consists of talks held by current Saint Mary’s professors, coaches, staff and alumnae.

“We don’t really have leadership classes, so we wanted to bring in different alum, or different professors from the school,” she said

Zupancic said the program has been a success thus far.

Looking toward next semester, Gans and Zupancic both said a major goal would be better communication with the student body.

Gans said she wishes SGA would have administered more student feedback programs to allow students to voice their concerns this semester. However, Zupancic said this process is difficult because not many students find new problems at Saint Mary’s.

“There aren’t very many issues here at Saint Mary’s that we have to deal with. Still, I think we have a long way to go to making Saint Mary’s the best place possible, and the hardest thing to do is to make something good better,” she said.



EILEEN VEIHMAYER/The Observer

Student body president Nicole Gans and vice president Jackie Zupanic listen to a SGA debate during a Sept. 7 meeting.

“It’s not that we hope students will find something to complain about, but feedback on day-to-day issues if it’s a class, or even if it’s (that) people want to get paid every two weeks instead of monthly, is beneficial.”

Ultimately, Gans and Zupancic said their biggest goal for next semester is to spread awareness that SGA values the needs of the student body, Zupancic said.

“I wish students saw SGA as their ally and us fighting for them,” she said. “But if there aren’t fighting issues, it’s tough to make students aware. We want to change their interests into tangible things that make them grow.”

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Grade: **B+**

Gans and Zupancic have done an excellent job of restructuring their platform goals to better meet the needs of SGA today. Campus pride and community outreach were two focus points both girls expressed interest in during their initial campaign. However, student government housekeeping tasks — amending the SGA constitution, re-writing bylaws and restructuring the process of SGA — have taken precedent over student communication. Next semester, the administration should refocus on campaign goals and concentrate on improved student communication.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Group creates new leadership development program

SGA hosts variety of successful events, raises awareness about the resources available at the College

By MADELINE MILES
News Writer

Saint Mary’s College Student Government Association (SGA) hosted a variety of successful events this semester, but executive secretary Emma Brink said “Proud Past, Promising Future” was among the best.

“The goal of this series is to inspire students to become leaders on campus as well as teach current and aspiring leaders skills that they can take with them into the future,” Brink, a senior, said.

The “Proud Past, Promising Future” leadership development program is split into five separate workshops. The first workshop, “So You Think You Can Lead?” began the series last month. SGA hosted another workshop called “Motivation” on Wednesday.

The program will conclude in March. Any students who attends all five events will receive a leadership certificate from SGA.

Senior Emily Skirtich, SGA chief of staff, said another successful

SGA event was the “Love a Belle, Support a Belle” event, during which SGA reached out to fellow Belles who struggle with anxiety and depression.

“Our main goal was to raise awareness and advocate for the resources available on campus,” Skirtich said.

SGA is currently working on the Le Mans Tunnel Project to decorate the tunnel connecting Le Mans Hall to the Student Center. Design submissions are now being accepted.

“It really is a great way for students to leave their mark on Saint Mary’s forever,” Brink said.

Next semester, members have plans to improve the structure of SGA to help it run more efficiently. The Board will work in an interim stage as it analyzes the success of future changes.

The current structure does not allow for easy communication between board members, Brink said. SGA is planning to restructure for easier, freer communication between leaders of the College.

The Board currently consists of 25 commissioners, but officers said they’d like to see that number increase.

“We would instead like to see Class Boards, Clubs, Commissioners, Big Boards, and Student Academic Council as committees headed by the five executive members of student government,” Brink said. “The information and concerns would then be filtered to a senate of elected students who will vote on the major issues at hand, hopefully eliminating any bias held by current members.”

Skirtich is hopeful for the reconstruction of SGA.

“A lot of hours and manpower, research and collaboration will go into the reconstruction of the Association,” Skirtich said. “By the time that classes resume in January, SGA will operate more smoothly and efficiently.”

With more elected positions on SGA and a larger body, Brink hopes the new structure will allow for increased student participation in the group.

“Despite working in an interim stage, we still plan to be as committed to student issues and concerns as always,” Brink said.

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Grade: **A**

Student Government Association hosted a number of successful events this semester, including an inspirational leadership series called “Proud Past, Promising Future.” While these workshops were informative and productive, much of SGA’s efforts were focused on projects that take effect next semester — such as student government restructuring and the Le Mans Tunnel Project. These projects distracted the group’s attention from its more immediate duties to the student body. Next semester, SGA should try to balance day-to-day event planning and long-term projects more effectively.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES BOARD

SAB hosts seasonal events, engages community

Board begins fall on high note, plans ahead for SMC Tostal and spring concert in upcoming semester

By JILLIAN BARWICK
News Writer

Saint Mary's Student Activities Board (SAB) successfully paired traditional favorites with new events this semester, president Allie Courtney said.

"Our ultimate goal is to bring the Saint Mary's community together through a variety of different events," Courtney said. "I think we have accomplished that this semester. We hosted different events this semester for a new change and appealed to a different part of the student body."

The year began on high note with the Belles Bash, Courtney said. She said over 400 students enjoyed inflatables, a DJ and a laser tag arena at the Bash.

"Undoubtedly the best event of the semester was Belles Bash, our giant kick-off event," Courtney said. "It was a great way for

SAB to help students begin their year at Saint Mary's."

After this successful start, SAB drew crowds to its first Fright Fest right before Halloween. The evening featured a haunted house, pumpkin-carving contest and a 1920s-themed Murder Mystery dinner party.

The semester concluded with its annual Winter Wonderland, a holiday service event, in December. Courtney said the Board paired with 20 different clubs to provide crafts and games for underprivileged children in the South Bend community.

"We definitely encouraged community throughout our campus by collaborating with a variety of clubs in Winter Wonderland," Courtney said.

Courtney said she expects more successful events from SAB in the spring to brighten up



Photo courtesy of Allie Courtney

Over 400 students gathered for inflatables, a DJ and laser tag in August for the Belles Bash that kicked off the school year at Saint Mary's.

the dreary winter months.

"For next semester, Midnight Madness will be returning," Courtney said. "The spring concert in April and SMC Tostal are also in the works for next semester."

After wrapping up the fall semester, Courtney, a senior, said

she is nostalgic about heading into her last semester with SAB, but is focused on planning successful events.

"We will finally host an outdoor movie, scavenger hunt, canoe races, New Year's party and more Sundaes on Sunday's," Courtney said. "It's very

bittersweet for me to be going into my last semester on SAB, but I know [SAB vice president] Caitlyn Wonski, and I are determined to make it special and full of great events."

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Government in brief

RHA hosts spirit, service weeks

From Harry Potter Trivia Nights to community service, president Kat Nelson said the Residence Hall Association (RHA) has hosted a number of successful events this semester.

"RHA, along with the Hall Councils, have helped put on some amazing events so far this year," Nelson said. "For RHA, we have had two very big events. One of [them] was Spirit Week, which included a pep rally and canoe races. We also put on a Service Week for those who serve the Saint Mary's Community in a variety of capacities."

Nelson said the annual all-school Saint Mary's formal on Jan. 28 and Lil' Sibs Weekend next semester are expected to be popular due to the success of RHA's other events this year.

"I am looking forward to watching RHA continue to grow," she said. "Many of the women involved this year are very passionate about what RHA does and enjoy taking part in planning our events. Their excitement and ideas are what build our organization."

-Bridget Feeney

SBD raises awareness at College

Saint Mary's Student Diversity Board (SDB) will continue to bring inspiring and informative events to Saint Mary's during the spring semester, president Kelly Reidenbach said.

"The mission of SDB is to create awareness of diversity in order to educate, provide support, celebrate differences within the Saint Mary's College community by creating social events, educational programming and opportunities to initiate change," she said.

Reidenbach said the board, which has met weekly since August, has a busy but productive semester.

"Our biggest events this past semester were the International Meet and Greet in August and the Annual Bonfire in October," Reidenbach said.

Reidenbach said students can look forward to many events next spring, including Disabilities Awareness Week, Women's Appreciation Week and the Diverse Students' Leadership Conference (DSLCL).

"They are all amazing events, but DSLCL is our biggest event of the year," she said.

-Bridget Feeney

SAC connects students, staff

Student Academic Council (SAC) worked as a bridge between students and the administration this semester, student body vice president Jackie Zupancic said.

Zupancic serves as the council's president. The council includes one student representative from every academic department on campus.

"We discuss issues such as class schedules, class times and other problems or concerns about student needs," Zupancic said. "SAC's purpose is to be the voice and liaison between the students and administration for issues of academics."

Next semester, SAC will host "Major Week," which will promote the College's different departments and majors, and "Choose Your Major" night, which will allow underclassmen to discuss major options with faculty and fellow students.

"With the change in the structure of the Student Government Association, I am excited to see SAC take on a stronger role for students' issues in their departments," she said.

-Bridget Feeney

FIRST-YEAR BOARD

The First Year Board's top priority this semester was adopting a charity cause, class board president McKenna Schuster said.

The class adopted a family of five and is purchasing Christmas gifts for the family. Tonight, the class board will host the event "Holiday Belles," where the class will gather to wrap presents for the family while enjoying Christmas cookies and hot chocolate.

"We think it will be a great way to take a quick break from studying to bond as a class and get together for a good cause," Schuster said.

Next semester, the Board will begin planning their formal, which is set to take place in February. Schuster said the class plans to hold more events next semester, including class scavenger hunts, fundraisers and additional charity work.

-Anna Boarini

SOPHOMORE BOARD

The Sophomore Class Board was hard at work this semester planning their class formal, which was held Nov. 18 in the Hagar College Center.

Elliot Miller, sophomore class board president, said the night was a big success.

"Even though we have nearly 60 classmates studying abroad this semester, the formal had a great turn out," Miller said. "Everyone seemed to enjoy the night tremendously."

Miller said this year, the Sophomore Class Board wanted to be more financially responsible. She said that so far, they have met that goal.

The formal's expenses were completely covered by the costs of tickets, Miller said.

Next semester, the Board will host Sophomore Parents Weekend in February and Miller said she hopes they can cover part of the cost with the money saved on this semester's formal.

-Anna Boarini

JUNIOR BOARD

The Junior Class Board spent the semester planning the Junior Formal, which took place Dec. 2.

Class board president Torrie Thompson said the formal was a success.

"We are also considering planning another casual dance," she said.

Next semester, the board will focus on planning for Junior Mom's Weekend, which will take place in April.

The weekend will include a wine and cheese party, a formal dinner with President Carol Ann Mooney and a mother-daughter social event.

Belles and their mothers will also have the opportunity to tour the Riedinger House and there will be a silent auction to help raise money to cover the cost of Senior Week next year.

-Anna Boarini

SENIOR BOARD

Fall semester, the Senior Class Board focused primarily on planning for Senior Dad's Weekend. The event featured a beer garden, silent auction and a Wake Forest game watch at the College Football Hall of Fame.

The weekend concluded with a special Mass on Sunday for Belles and their fathers.

Class board president Maggie DePaola said the weekend was a success.

"This is an exciting weekend to plan and is always a special time for the seniors and their dads," she said.

Next semester will be especially busy for the Senior Class Board as it prepares for events for Senior Week, including their senior class formal.

-Anna Boarini