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SIZING UP STUDENT GOVERNMENT



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

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'We're in full support'

Rocheleau, student government mark establishment of GLBTQ student organization



BRANDON KEELEAN | The Observer

By **JOHN CAMERON**
News Editor

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

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

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

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

position.

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

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

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

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

"They brought us in, current members of Core [Council for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Questioning Students], the petition holders for the [proposed] graduate students [GLBTQ] club,

and [unofficial gay-straight alliance] AllianceND," he said. "We had meetings with Student Affairs where we collaborated on various ideas on how we wanted this to work."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Steps, not strides

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

By **KRISTEN DURBIN**
News Editor

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

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

While Rocheleau and Rose have done a commendable job of overseeing the smooth operation of student government as a whole, they have relied too heavily on the ideas of previous administrations and have not effectively used their roles as president and vice president to effect innovative change on campus through major initiatives.

Constituent services

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

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

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

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

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

Aside from these visits, the improvements in constituent services have largely come from the work of the department and its head, junior Liza Manfred, to survey students and distribute the subsequent results to other department directors.

“[Constituent Services] is great because they are able to give information out to the student body and answer questions, and if they can’t answer them, they find those answers,” Rocheleau said.

Student safety

Rocheleau and Rose also emphasized the improvement of student safety on and off campus in their platform, and they have overseen collaboration between student government and the University to make progress toward their goal.

Rocheleau said he and Rose met with Executive Vice President John Affleck-Graves to discuss on-campus security issues such as campus lighting.

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

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

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

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

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

Changing focus

After taking office, Rocheleau and Rose had to address the ongoing discussion about racial discrimination at Notre Dame as a result of the Call to Action movement and town hall meeting in March. During the first months of their term, the Call to Action



Observer File Photo

Brett Rocheleau, left, and Katie Rose reflected on their term so far as student body president and vice president. With student government turnover looming, it remains to be seen how much change will be enacted.

committee, the Office of Student Affairs, dorm multicultural commissioners and other campus organizations have worked to bring the University “up to the standard of embracing diversity” through more than 15 different initiatives, including an extensive internal diversity audit completed by Student Affairs, Rose said.

“It was at that point [in March] that we kind of looked around and said, ‘Why all of a sudden does it feel like we’re decades back on an issue we really should be at the forefront of?’” she said.

In response to that question, Rose said she and Rocheleau created a subcommittee in the Department of Residence Life to tackle “less formal interactions” related to racial discrimination.

Although Rocheleau and Rose did not anticipate collaborating closely with the Career Center, Rose said they have facilitated cooperation and helped generate student feedback on the Center’s services and its perception among students as providing business-oriented services.

“It was good to hear what students thought about the Career Center so they can remedy some negative associations and change the perception of it back to where it was,” Rose said.

An unfulfilled legacy?

Although progress has been made in the areas of constituent services and safety, Rocheleau and Rose’s plans for deepening Notre Dame’s relationship with South Bend, modernizing the University and connecting it to the global community have generally not moved from discussion into concrete action thus far.

The administration’s work in the South Bend community has merely expanded on previously created initiatives and events, including the eND Hunger campaign and community picnics, and Rocheleau and Rose’s idea to bring a specialty grocery store to Eddy Street Commons will not come to fruition in the

foreseeable future.

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

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

Rose said.

Despite these shortcomings, Rocheleau and Rose said they are pleased with progress that has been made and are optimistic about the remainder of their term.

“We’re really happy with everything we’ve accomplished in the past nine months in office, and we have a lot of things checked off our platform and currently in progress,” Rocheleau said. “Next semester, we hope to revisit issues of the nondiscrimination clause and medical amnesty, which will be interesting due to changes in Indiana state legislation.”

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

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GRADE: B-

President and Vice President

Rocheleau and Rose campaigned in an unopposed race largely on ideas produced by previous administrations rather than their own unique innovations. They admit to the influence of the McCormick-Rocheleau administration in their platform, promising to continue the work of that administration by “advancing this vision we all share and delivering measurable results.” However, tangible results have given way to prolonged discussion and limited action during the current administration, despite the significant collaboration Rocheleau and Rose cited between the Office of the President and Vice President, other student government departments and University entities. Lacking an innovative vision of his own, Rocheleau has depended on the work of his predecessor to drive his term as president of a reactionary, not revolutionary, administration. To their credit, Rocheleau and Rose have adequately met the requirements of their positions in overseeing solid work and collaboration by student government as a whole. Without getting any signature initiatives off the ground, they have not gone beyond the minimum expectation of their work to leave a unique legacy on Notre Dame.

STUDENT SENATE

Senate increases efficiency since merge with COR

By MADDIE DALY
News Writer

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

"I'm really happy about our successes so far," Rose said. "I could not be happier with the engagement and enthusiasm of the Senate members and department heads."

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

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

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

This year's senators have approved more resolutions than their predecessors, Rose said, because the merged setting allows them to actively engage with the group's agenda.

"It's so exciting to see people engaged during the meetings, and the fact that we've passed 34 resolutions so far — more than previous senates have passed in entire years — is a testament to the senators themselves," Rose said. "The resolutions that warrant more discussion than others have pushed us to strengthen our arguments and keep everyone engaged and alert."

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

One of the more controversial resolutions sparked debate on the formation of a sub-committee of the gender relations department, which in turn prompted discussion of a Gay-Straight Alliance. Senate members argued quite heatedly and needed intervening on Rose's part to stay on topic and stay professional rather than



JULIE HERDER | The Observer

Student Senate conducts business at a meeting on Nov. 28. Senate passed 34 resolutions since taking office.

getting too involved in personal opinions. The resolution ended up being passed on Sept. 12 despite the debate.

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

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

"Student Senate has held its discipline so far," Rose said. "Sometimes enthusiasm wanes a little bit, attendance declines, things get busy — but this year is the first year we haven't had to call senators asking where they are. We've had no attendance problems and always get emails from senators who can't attend or who plan to send a proxy. I'm very proud by the amount of work everyone has put in."

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

"I love the fact that transitions happen in February and we are able to have department heads appointed by March," Rose said. "That way we can have plenty of talks with our predecessors to establish a good relationship. Transition month is crucial."

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

"It's tough to get all the lingo down, and a lot of it has to be learned as you go," Rose said. "Before the first Senate meeting we have a senator training program where we go through a fake resolution to practice. I

like parliamentary procedure because it makes sure everyone has an equal voice and ensures that the meetings run smoothly. It's good because it keeps everything formal."

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

"It's fantastic if we can improve the school, but it's an even better opportunity for people to work together and find new avenues when there's a roadblock, learn how to divide up tasks," Rose said. "To hear people on senate talk about how they've become more engaged in the school and developed personally, that's what makes me happy."

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GRADE: A-

Senate

Because of the enriching discussions, attentive participation and respectable quantity of resolutions passed, this year's Senate deserves an A-. The group has accomplished some tangible goals, like the approval of a HAWK system near Twyckenham Road, and maintained a disciplined and professional atmosphere. However, many of their resolutions were puppet statements, adding to the group's filed paperwork but not actually accomplishing much.

B+

The **Department of Academic Affairs** worked to reform several academic policy measures, and revised its own constitution. Department director Maxwell Brown led the department as it coordinated the Last Lecture series, assisted in the library renovation process and advocated for the restructuring of other university policies related to DuLac. Academic Affairs also created an interactive study spaces map on InsideND and continued the College Readership Program. Despite the department's achievements, Academic Affairs earns a B+ because it failed to meet its own objective of marketing its initiatives to the student body.

A

The **Department of Campus Technology** appointed technology commissioners in each dorm to resolve students' technical support problems more efficiently, fostered the development of mobile technology through multiple events at a "Mobile Summit" and supported Academic Affairs' initiative to create maps of campus study spaces. Department director Yiting Zheng led her department as they worked to place computers in O'Shaughnessy Hall, better support cell phone service on campus and support initiatives undertaken by the University Council for Academic Technologies. The department earns an A for its work this semester because the initiatives both thoroughly addressed the needs of the Notre Dame community and were efficiently implemented.

B-

The **Department of Community Relations** hosted several large events for students, including a new student bus tour, a welcome picnic with the Robinson Community Learning Center and a community earlier this fall. Department director Kelsey Eckenrode guided her department through collaboration with the Co-Campus Council, which has allowed connections between area campuses and residents to multiply. Community Relations also has planned a CommUniversity Day for the spring and a student discount program but because the department has pursued a thin array of initiatives, it earns a B-.

A-

The **Department of Constituent Services** made its presence known on campus through visits to Hall Council meetings and a Facebook campaign aiming to connect students to their representatives in student government. Department director Liza Manfred guided her team as they organized student feedback and suggestions to the appropriate departments, and has planned several initiatives for the spring including 'Senate SparkNotes,' an on-campus farmer's market and a leftover apparel sale. The department earns an A- because its initiatives are creative and varied, but it could still engage more deeply the student community.

A+

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

A

The **Department of Internal Affairs** monitored revisions to last year's Student Union reform, the creation of new Class Council bylaws and adjustments to the Student Union Secretary position and the orientation for new senators. Department director Benjamin Noe also led his department as they crafted a new rule for the Senate permitting proxy attendance for unavailable senators, the new campus ministry representative position and the write-in amendment for campus elections. Internal Affairs earns an A for effectively monitoring recent reforms while also continuing to streamline student government further.

C+

The **Department of Residence Life** installed hydration stations in Rolf's Sports Recreation Center, the Rockne Memorial Gymnasium and in the residence halls. Department director Parker Dwyer led his department as it installed hand dryers in the residence halls, worked to delete meal times in the dining halls and installed a sub-committee specifically promote diversity in housing. The department plans to also install high efficiency washing machines in the residence halls and further promote diversity in housing. Residence Life earns a C+ because though it has effectively responded to diversity issues, it has focused in too much on the installation of hydration stations and has neglected to pursue a variety of policy initiatives.

A-

The **Department of Social Concerns** has finalized a "ServeND" website to make it easier for students to pursue service opportunities and nearly has completed a food nutrition booklet to aid South Bend residents using food stamps. Department director Pail DiGiovanni guided his team as it ran a Sept. 11 letter-writing campaign and a lecture on Syrian conflict and refugee situation as a joint effort with Acousticafe. The department has planned a broomball event, charities to benefit Hurricane Sandy victims, a documentary series and a charity run. Social Concerns earns an A- for its efforts this semester; although the department has concentrated its efforts on a few initiatives, those initiatives have been extremely successful.

B+

The **Department of University Affairs** worked to promote general safety on campus by conducting safety audits, expanding NDSP Safewalk services and renovating sidewalks. Department director Michael Masi led his department as they reviewed the incoming HAWK system on Twyckenham Road, student ID cards, implemented hydration stations in DeBartolo Hall and restored campus statues. The department also plans to collaborate in planning of the 2012-2013 Forum, while promoting efforts towards sustainability in student government. University Affairs earns a B+ for its effective initiatives, especially for those related to campus safety; however the scope of its initiatives is limited and too heavily focused on sustainability efforts.

STUDENT UNION BOARD

SUB broadens appeal, prepares for spring events

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

By **MEL FLANAGAN**
News Writer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"We're trying to move it out of Stepan because we've seen complaints due to space that not everyone can attend if they want



JODI LO | The Observer

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

to," Markowski said. "We've been looking at Compton [Family Ice Area] since they just had a concert there."

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

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

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

"Most people go to events in the first two to three weeks of the semester so we're trying to move the ND Literary Festival to the second week of classes," Markowski said. "We're looking at some authors

for that. We want the theme to be authors that have books that have become movies, and we're trying to have a movie watch go on with the authors."

On a larger scale next semester, the group will work on reaching more students with its advertising. Markowski, who lives off campus this year, said she realized how isolated some members of the student body are.

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

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GRADE: A

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

FACULTY SENATE

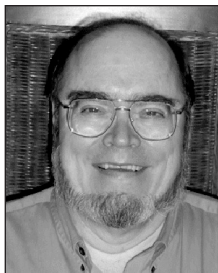
Faculty Senate discusses graduate program issues

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

By **TORI ROECK**
News Writer

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

Doug Archer
Faculty Senate chair



thoroughly discussed the consequences of future resolutions.

Although the group passed no resolutions this semester, Faculty Senate chair Doug Archer said last semester's resolutions supporting Student Senate's decisions to advocate for a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) on campus and the addition of sexual orientation to the

University's non-discrimination clause are still at the forefront.

The Board of Trustees struck down the motion to amend the non-discrimination clause in the spring, but the University approved an unnamed official student organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (GLBTQ) students earlier this week. The plan also included the creation of a new advisory board and the future hire of a full-time staff member to liaison between the administration and the student body.

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

"Graduate students can purchase insurance through the University for individuals ... but

they can't purchase it for families," Archer said.

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

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

Gregory Sterling, dean of the graduate school, responded to the resolution citing the weak economy for the school's slow

progress in complying with Faculty Senate's requests. He also said the forthcoming Wellness Center will better address health concerns for graduate students and their dependents.

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

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

teach]."

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

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

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

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

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CAMPUS LIFE COUNCIL

Collaborative effort

By CAROLYN HUTYRA
News Writer

Campus Life Council (CLC) hit the ground running this semester at its first meeting in September, and the drive has not let up since. While the group has experimented with different meeting styles in recent years, including a committee-based approach, CLC operated as a whole this semester to work today improving the student experience at Notre Dame.

Student body president Brett Rocheleau said all CLC members ranked the most important concerns facing Notre Dame students and compiled a final list of 12 primary issues. He said the council decided to tackle each problem individually.

“[We] look into each issue, bring in the relevant Student Affairs members or the relevant administrators for the conversation, talk with them, give recommendations,” he said.

Rocheleau said the CLC focuses on giving recommendations to the University administration rather than on passing resolutions like other representative bodies. If a resolution is passed, the vice president for Student Affairs must respond within an allotted amount of time, Rocheleau said.

Questioning the feasibility of proposed changes is the primary question, he said, and moving forward from answering that question is CLC’s subsequent goal.

The first issue of focus for the CLC dealt with offering consultation to the Board of Trustees on the problem of discrepancies across residence halls and factors encouraging students to move off campus, Rocheleau said. The Council concluded the primary issues with living on campus were affordability and independence.

“If you look at being at Irish Row [apartments], you pretty much save money from being on campus and you have more space, more freedom,” he said.

Students often desire a stepping stone between campus life and post-graduation residence in large cities like Chicago or New York, Rocheleau said. Other focus areas for the CLC and Board of Trustees in terms of residence life stemmed from a comprehensive strategic plan for the University from 2003 in which a number of goals went unfulfilled.

“[We] brought highlights back to the board, saying these are some things we would like to revisit,” he said.

Some suggestions from that plan included tearing down Stepan Center and replacing it with a new, larger-scale version of the LaFortune Student Center and exploring options to reduce on-campus beds by 10 percent in all residence halls to prevent overcrowding and allow for open study spaces, Rocheleau said.

“Our [University housing] size, if we didn’t want to do overcrowding, is built for 8,000 students.



SUZANNA PRATT | The Observer

Student body president Brett Rocheleau, left, and Michael Masi confer at a Campus Life Council meeting last year.

Right now we have 8,400,” he said. “The class acceptance size has slowly been going up.”

CLC also discussed the potential construction of additional residence halls and new senior housing options on campus, Rocheleau said. The council suggested both co-ed dorms and themed housing, but the group’s main focus remained solving the on-campus housing inconsistencies, especially the current overcrowding issue and inequalities in living amenities between dorms.

“The board was very shocked to see the differences across dorms,” Rocheleau said.

Some dorms lack basic amenities such as kitchens or a 24-hour space, he said, and evidence of overcrowding and dorm inconsistencies are manifested in forced triples, a “quint” five-person room in Pangborn Hall and comparisons between double room sizes in Morrissey and Duncan Halls.

“Five girls living in a study area, that’s something that shouldn’t happen on campus especially with everyone paying the same amount of room and board,” Rocheleau said.

The council presented this information, along with additional data, to the Board earlier this semester.

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

“CLC was very happy seeing that the Call to Action was moving forward, and it wasn’t just a one-semester thing,” he said.

The council invited G. David Moss, senior consultant for Student Affairs, to speak about the Call to Action’s accomplishments.

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

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

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

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

Overall, Rocheleau said he considers the past semester a productive one for CLC.

“I think CLC has been a great success this year,” he said. “I’ve been really happy with the different discussions we’ve had.”

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GRADE: A

Campus Life Council

CLC started the year by creating an effective system of drawing attention to the main issues affecting the Notre Dame campus and students. They voted on the most important topics, and overviewed them in a timely fashion. CLC also reached out to and included outside sources in their conversations in order to gain sufficient information on topics of discussion. Council members, students and faculty alike, provided insightful information and viewpoints that helped produce informed recommendations that were presented to the Board of Trustees.

GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Graduate student union (GSU) expands grants, ups event attendance

This semester, the Notre Dame Graduate Student Union saw a substantial increase in attendance at its events, including its Halloween party, skating and trivia events, GSU president Doug Rice said. Rice said one of the GSU’s major recent accomplishments was changing its presentation grant request limit from \$200 to \$2,000, allowing students to attend and financially cover more conferences than in past years. Rice said the GSU has also started offering a grant encouraging collaboration across disciplines. The GSU will host its annual Christmas party today and is in the process of planning a charity gala for this coming March, Rice said.

- Dan Brombach

Board collaborates with The Shirt, will review expenditures

The Financial Management Board (FMB) spent the semester consulting with student organizations and working with The Shirt Charity Fund, FMB chairman Alexa Shaw said. “[The fund] distributes proceeds from The Shirt to those with extraordinary medical conditions and financial needs,” Shaw said. “Financial Management Board also strives to stimulate collaboration within different clubs and organizations through our Collaboration Fund.” FMB will prepare next semester’s expenditures in the next few weeks, Shaw said. “Our winter spending review and reallocation process and our annual spring allocation will continue to provide funding for student organizations and class councils as they look towards planning exciting programs for the student body in the spring,” she said.

- Tori Roeck

Council fosters interaction between residence hall leaders

The Hall Presidents Council (HPC) forged connections between dorm representatives to strengthen its event-planning capacity, co-chair Matthew Lynch said. “We decided to focus on having ways to make the meetings more interactive between dorms,” Lynch said. “We spent time during our weekly meetings splitting up into groups based on quads in order to make the meetings more interactive between dorms.” This initiative has helped the dorms to collaborate on large-scale events like the Hunger Games Event, Lynch said. HPC continued to improve its selection process for Hall of the Year, Lynch said. “The biggest challenge we have had is finding the perfect and most transparent process,” Lynch said.

- Nicole Michels

Club Coordination Council revamps funding allocation process

The Club Coordination Council’s (CCC) cardinal task for the fall semester was to improve the allocation process of distributing money to individual clubs, CCC president Hannah Burke said. “The whole council saw a lot of issues with it and saw the need to revamp it,” she said. “The allocations will not happen until April, so we still have time.” Burke said the CCC has broken down the allocation process into several steps. “All of the deadlines we’ve set for ourselves have been met,” she said.

- Adam Llorens

Senior Class Council seeks feedback, offers transitional programming

Senior Class Council (SCC) focused on opening up communication this semester. “We’ve really tried to follow through with these goals by opening up the discussion of Senior Week planning to the whole class via a town hall meeting,” SCC president Tricia Corbran said. Popular events have included a cooking class in Legends, a “Campus Cuisine” event featuring foods from campus eateries and a “Senior Slump” discussion on life after Notre Dame. Next semester, Corbran said the council will look into continuing with programming focused on transitioning to post-graduate life.

- Mel Flanagan

Junior Class Council organizes events, designs apparel

Junior Class President Lizzie Helpling said the Junior Class Council (JCC) has met its goals for the semester. “JCC set out to program events and activities that would unite the junior class in a way that was accessible to the students,” Helpling said. This semester, the council organized a Glow-in-the-Dark Rosary, a pumpkin painting service project, a Halloween ice skating night, a Stanford game tailgate, a trip to Cedar Point and new “bro tanks.” Helpling said JCC effectively maintains communication with the junior class through monthly newsletters, which keep students abroad informed and unify the junior class.

- Christian Myers

Sophomore Class Council offers well-rounded programming schedule

Class president Tim Scanlan said the Sophomore Class Council worked to achieve social, spiritual, and service goals this semester by planning events like a block party and a BYU class tailgate. “We’re doing an all-year program called the Class Cup which includes events like trivia night, a hot dog eating contest, and a strobe light volleyball tournament last weekend called ‘Strobe Set Spike.’” Scanlan said the Council collaborated with Campus Ministry to put together a class Mass and a recurring rosary event. “On the service side, we decided to start a new initiative called ‘Take 5,’ where the idea is to take five minutes to do something nice,” Scanlan said.

- Ann Marie Jakubowski

Freshman Class Council starts off ND years on high note

Class of 2016 president Hugh Phelan has been in office for less than a semester, but he has already organized several impressively attended events with. The Freshman Class Council’s hosted the Monster Mosh Halloween dance. FCC also hosted a bonfire on Holy Cross Hill, which Phelan said attracted several hundred students. Currently, Phelan and his council are fundraising for Operation Smile, a charity providing surgeries for children with facial deformities. They are working on “Prayer Partners,” a program that matches more than 200 freshmen to pray for each other.

- Maddie Daly

SMC STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

Leading the transition

Senior duo ushers in new government structure, looks to collect more feedback around the College

By JILLIAN BARWICK

Saint Mary's Editor

As the restructuring of the Saint Mary's Student Government Association (SGA) settled in, student body president Maureen Parsons and vice president Meghan Casey found the transition smooth as they took office last spring.

When the year began, Parsons was unsure of how the students would handle the new structure of SGA, however she found that students were increasingly receptive of the changes and welcomed them happily.

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

Casey, like Parsons, was

originally concerned with the communication between councils and the student body and how it might get lost during the restructuring.

Maureen Parsons

senior
student body president

"Continuing to improve communication through the new SGA structure is a huge priority

Meghan Casey

senior
student body vice president

of ours," Casey said. "Also, working to get more students to events on campus, whether it be sporting events or other activities held at Saint Mary's is a big priority of ours as well for next semester."

Parsons and Casey have played

a large role in creating awareness of OrgSync, a place where students are able to access all communication from clubs on campus.

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

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

"I hope that the Belle Tower will increase student participation in organizations as well as student attendance at various events," Parsons said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ultimately, student input is a huge part of the success Parsons and Casey want to see for Saint

Mary's and its student body.

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

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GRADE: A-

SMC President, VP

The duo successfully helped in the restructuring efforts with SGA, resulting in a more efficient, effective governing student body. However, the usability of the Belle Tower remains uncertain and leaves room for clarification.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

SGA adjusts to new structure, promotes programming

By BRIDGET FEENEY

Associate Saint Mary's Editor

The revamped Student Government Association (SGA) spent this year adapting to its new structure while incorporating new initiatives into its traditional programming. The new SGA layout, approved by last year's leadership, took effect at the start of this semester.

Student body president Maureen Parsons said this year's primary task has been to complete this restructuring.

The result, she said, has been positive.

"We have been working hard to lay a strong foundation for what the new SGA will look like and how it will operate," she said. "It is making SGA more efficient and successful."

Under the previous model, SGA was one governing body that encompassed all its members — executives, class board presidents and representatives from Student Diversity Board, the Residence Hall Association and Student Activities Board.

Parsons said the new layout allows all these members to be more vocal in contributing their ideas.

"Now we have five councils comprised of class boards, committee chairs, the big boards, Student Academic Council and clubs," she

said. "Now clubs have a bigger role within SGA. The Senate was also added to the new structure."

With this new structure, Parsons said the reorganization has required some adjustments.

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

Vice president of external affairs Kat Sullivan also praised the group's reorganization.

"The new structure has been working really well," she said. "Having different groups for each Council ... makes our meetings more focused and productive."

Ringling in the Belle Tower

Saint Mary's students experienced another major change this year when the College integrated a new online network called the Belle Tower, which features the all-school events calendar and online club information. The network hosts OrgSync, a new software that Parsons said is a unique way for students, clubs and administrators to communicate. Students were encouraged to sign up on the Belle Tower beginning in October.

"Many students compare it to a Facebook for clubs," she said.

"Clubs can advertise events and communicate with members and other students through the portal."

The move to the Belle Tower was a joint effort between SGA and Student Involvement and Multicultural Services (SIMS).

"SIMS approached SGA to participate in various webinars to decide which program best suited Saint Mary's," she said. "So, this summer I worked with SIMS in picking a portal."

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

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

Leslie Wilson, vice president of internal affairs, said while the switch to the Belle Tower has brought some difficulties, it has been an overall success.

"It has been an adjustment for the student body — but it is definitely a necessary adjustment," she said. "The main issue was and will be to get students comfortable with navigating the site and encouraging them to check it regularly to see what is going on campus."

Promoting programming

Parsons said how SGA has maintained its focus on social issues.

"At the beginning of the year, we cosponsored [the] Belles Against Violence Office kickoff to make sure girls were aware of the resources available to them in regard to relationship violence," she said.

"Support a Belle, Love a Belle" was another important week-long initiative, which Parsons said was designed "to show support to our sisters struggling with anxiety and depression."

While much of campus winds down for break, Parsons said the SGA is planning ahead for a busy spring semester.

"We want to make sure that clubs and organizations aren't planning too many events on the same days because we don't want our organizations to compete."

Wilson said the communication and feedback from students is crucial to SGA's goals for next semester, and she envisioned OrgSync playing a bigger role in alerting the campus about events and other news.

"We have recently sent out evaluations to all SGA members to hear their thoughts on how the semester has gone so far and what we can do to move forward next semester," she said.

Two of next semester's biggest events, Love Your Body Week and

Heritage Week, already have some events planned, Parsons said.

"We are really excited about Heritage Week this year," she said. "This year's theme is connecting the tradition of the College to the present and taking it into the future."

Though the year has been marked with many changes and transitional periods, Sullivan said everything has gone well and according to plan.

"I am really happy with the way this year is going," she said. "I think SGA will always be a work in progress but things have been going well so far. We are constantly asking how we can move forward and learn from our past and I feel that is so important to any organization."

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GRADE: A-

SGA

The board has responded well to the new structure. However, not enough attention has been given to the smaller clubs and organizations on campus.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES BOARD

SAB engages students, builds on traditions

Board pleased with success of events in fall semester, begins planning spring schedule

By ANNA BOARINI
News Writer

As the “premiere programming board at Saint Mary’s College,” Student Activities Board (SAB) has combined tradition with creativity and looked for outside inspiration, SAB president Liz Kraig said.

“We wanted to maintain the popularity of traditional events, bring in new events and collaborate with different campuses,” she said.

Schwab said the group’s goal was to gather more student feedback on programming.

“This was the first year we sent out a survey for Tostal, asking who girls would be interested in having,” Kraig said. “It was nice to get the feedback to see who girls would like to bring most to campus.”

Kraig said SAB’s biggest event this year was the community Winter Wonderland.

“It’s our annual give-back event,” she said. “[Guests] can bring their families, siblings. It’s just a fun-filled event for families that may not be able to buy things for Christmas for their families.”

Both Kraig and Schwab serve on Co-Campus Committee, a group of students from local colleges, including Saint Mary’s, Notre Dame, Holy Cross College, Indiana University South Bend and Ivy Tech Community College.

Kraig said the Committee has facilitated community outreach through a Halloween party and community luncheon. Now in its third year, Kraig said the event expanded with involvement by the Co-Campus Committee.

“[Member schools] brought in their own students, as well as their own games and crafts,” she said. “TUSB’s Disney Club had someone [play the part of] Santa.”

Kraig said she hopes to

continue this collaboration.

“This was the first time we were really able to focus on the goal of incorporating the other campuses, not just Notre Dame but IUSB and Ivy Tech, too,” she said.

SAB kicked off the year with Belles Bash, a luau-themed event that included inflatables, an appearance by DJ Rough Cut and snow cones, Kraig said. Smaller-scale events were held at the beginning of the semester as well, including a bow-making event to promote the Belles cross country team and the Notre Dame football team prior to the Michigan game.

Throughout the year, SAB hosts Sundaes on Sunday, a movie screening series that has included titles such as “The Holiday” and “Snow White and the Huntsman,” Kraig said.

Looking to next semester, Kraig said SAB is looking forward to Midnight Madness, a traditional school-wide event promoting



Photo courtesy of Sarah Dapper

Bellacapella, the Saint Mary's acapella group, sings Christmas carols to South Bend children at SAB's Winter Wonderland on Saturday.

class unity that includes the announcement of the Tostal performing artist.

Leading up to Midnight Madness, Kraig said smaller events are scheduled to help classes earn points for the main event.

“So far, we’ve done Balloon Bombardment ... where seniors

got points for the most participation and the Turkey Bowl,” she said. “It’s our flag football tournament, which was even featured on the video for the [College’s] capital campaign, which is exciting.”

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GOVERNMENT IN BRIEF

Student Diversity Board

Saint Mary’s Student Diversity Board [SDB] works to spread awareness of the many different cultures on campus.

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

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

Galvin also said that group is trying to work with more of the multicultural clubs on campus.

SDB will kick off its work next semester with “Sugar Makes the World Go ‘Round,” which will feature dessert dishes from around the world. Later in the semester SDB will sponsor its annual events Disabilities Awareness Week, Women’s Appreciation

Week, and conclude with its Diverse Student Leadership Conference (DSLCL).

- Sarah Swiderski

Residence Hall Association

Saint Mary’s Residence Hall Association (RHA) has been hard at work this year under senior president Sarah Copi.

RHA facilitates interaction between the hall councils and promotes a community atmosphere through its programming. Copi said that fall RHA events were a success.

“RHA held a tailgate for the Michigan State vs. [Notre Dame] football game,” she said. “This was a great way for girls to meet new people and show their spirit. We even had a few people doing push-ups.”

The RHA also hosted a haunted house before Halloween.

“All four hall councils worked together to decorate and create fun games and a haunted house,” Copi said, “It was amazing to see the hall councils come together to plan such a successful event.”

RHA is also responsible for Spirit Week, where dorms compete for the title “Hall of the Year.” Next semester, RHA is planning the all-school formal and Lil’ Sibs Weekend.

- Sarah Swiderski

Council of Student Activities

Council of Student Activities [CSA] is one of five councils that fall under the Student Government Association of Saint Mary’s. The council is composed of representatives from Student Diversity Board, Student Activities Board (SAB), and Residence Hall Association.

CSA is chaired by student body president and senior Maureen Parsons. Parsons said the Council functions as a way to bring the various student activity groups together.

“We work to enrich campus life through the collaboration and coordination of campus programming. This council seeks to identify the primary responsibilities of each respective board, and capitalize on opportunities of overlap,” Parsons said.

In its first year, CSA is setting a precedent, she said.

“We are trying to lay the foundation for future years. Our main focus is improving campus programming by building on events we have and creating new ones. We also really want to show support for all events and programs on campus,” Parsons said.

- Sarah Swiderski

First Year Board

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

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

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

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

“The main purpose of ‘The Belle Games’ is our class to have fun and get to know some Belles they might not otherwise have had the opportunity to connect with.”

- Jillian Barwick

Sophomore Board

Over the course of the fall semester, the Sophomore Class Board planned the Sophomore

Formal. The formal was held Nov. 16. With a 1920s theme, the formal was a huge success for the Board, president Amy Trahan said.

“I am so grateful to my vice president Anna Fanelli and to our Class Board for how much hard work they put in to make this fun event possible,” Trahan said.

As for next semester, sophomores can look forward to Sophomore Parents weekend, which will be held the weekend of Feb. 8.

“Karen Johnson is helping us plan this event, as it is quite a big event, and it is important for parents to have a fun weekend with their daughter,” Trahan said. “After Sophomore Parents Weekend, we will be planning an Easter fundraiser and service event for our class.”

- Jillian Barwick

Junior Board

The main priority of the junior class this year is unity. The majority of the class is back from studying abroad sophomore year, and the class is well into their perspective majors, Class Board president Carolyn Backes said.

“As we get older we want our class to be closer with one another. As the smallest class at Saint Mary’s we want to work together to remember these great four years that we will spend here,” Backes said.

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

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

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

- Jillian Barwick

Senior Board

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

This semester, Senior Board planned and hosted Senior Dad’s Weekend, which board president Silvia Cuevas called a huge success.

“Senior Dad’s Weekend was a great time and starred hypnotist Tom DeLuca on the Friday night of the weekend,” Cuevas said. “It was an overall successful weekend full of great memories the seniors and their dads will definitely cherish forever.”

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

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

- Jillian Barwick