

# IN FOCUS

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# VISIONS OF NOTRE DAME

STUDENT BODY ELECTIONS



# Michael Masi | Tim Scanlan

**Who they are:** Presidential candidate Michael Masi is a junior from Siegfried Hall and current director of University Affairs for student government. His running mate, Tim Scanlan, is a sophomore from Morrissey Manor, current president of Sophomore Class Council and former Freshman Class Council president.

Masi hopes to leverage his student government experience to effectively tackle a wide range of goals relating to diversity, student life and community engagement.

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

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

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

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

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

**Best idea:** The Intercollegiate Forum on Social Justice is

intended to bring students from other colleges to campus for student-led presentations on social concerns projects. If instituted, this could be a meaningful opportunity for connecting like-minded students and facilitating collaboration across universities.

**Worst idea:** Potentially establishing freshmen sections within dorms.

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

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

**Notable quote:** "It's a comprehensive vision [and we have] all the experience to do it. We want to come together as one family with one mission and create one



Notre Dame and be united, inclusive and supportive." – Masi

**Fun facts:** Masi is from Greeley, Colo., described in a "South Park" episode as the exact opposite of Hawaii and referenced in "Fast Food Nation," which claims you can smell the town before you can see it.

Scanlan is from New Orleans and had never missed Mardi

Gras before coming to Notre Dame.

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

# Billy Christy | Pat Roemer



**Who they are:** Student body presidential candidate Billy Christy is a sophomore resident of O'Neill Hall originally from Palos Park, Ill. He is a Navy ROTC cadet and pre-medicine major. Vice presidential candidate Pat Roemer, a native of Great Falls, Va., is a sophomore political science and peace studies major who lives in St. Edward's Hall. A member of the Hesburgh-Yusko

Scholars program, Roemer is also involved in the Take Ten program at the Center for the Homeless.

**First priority:** Christy and Roemer stressed maintaining the continuity of existing positive aspects of student government between their potential election and taking office on April 1 to prevent "a period of dead space" during the transition between administrations. Roemer

said they'd do this by "walking a couple days" in the shoes of their predecessors, Brett Rocheleau and Katie Rose.

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

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

**Worst idea:** Expanding Zipcar subsidies from the University.

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

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

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

**Fun facts:** Roemer lived in Delhi, India, for two years and graduated high school there.

Christy has an irrational fear of apartment buildings: "They have long hallways and no one's really around ..."

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

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

# Kevin Salat | Paul Mascarenhas

**Who they are:** Marking the return of a Zahm House tradition, freshmen Kevin Salat and Paul Mascarenhas are the residence hall's annual contenders, coming in with a total lack of student government experience and a total surplus of confidence in their ability to lead the student body.

Salat reassured the Editorial Board of his ticket's sincerity.

"We really want to represent the real interests of students and what they really want," he said.

What students really want, according to Salat and Mascarenhas? Demolishing Mod Quad for more parking, converting Haggard Hall into a workout facility and establishing a study abroad program in Carroll Hall.

**First priority:** Mascarenhas had a simpler goal for his ticket's

first day in office.

"Getting rid of Scholastic," he said.

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

"Things I'm really passionate about are getting these stadium renovations done so we can raise ... \$2.5 million a game so we can put into project this monorail system so we can eliminate the walk I had to take yesterday from Saint Mary's to the [shuttle] and the [shuttle] off and into the building," Mascarenhas said. "It'll run right through all the buildings in Saint Mary's and back to Zahm and Alumni."

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

"Like every three seconds," he said.

**Best idea:** None

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

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

**Least feasible:** The rest of them.

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

Despite some questionable policies toward our sister school, Mascarenhas (claims to) date a Saint Mary's student.



**Notable quote:** "I like penguins and I feel like other people like penguins and would just really want to see penguins." – Salat

**Bottom line:** While Salat and Mascarenhas are likely to fall short as potential student body

leaders, they do not disappoint as comedians. With a substantially more offensive platform than any in recent memory, The Observer is primarily pleased to just have assembled enough content fit for print.



# Dominic Romeo | Philip Hootsmans



**Who they are:** While junior Dominic Romeo, a resident of Duncan Hall, lacks student government experience, his involvement at Notre Dame has ranged from walking onto the football team, leading marketing for The Shirt Project, going on an ISSLP in Tanzania and spending the fall semester in Beijing. Junior Philip Hootsmans, former vice president of Keenan Hall, also studied in Beijing and is a member of the

rugby team.

The candidates said they plan to build off their simple platform with ideas garnered directly from students.

"We picture ourselves more of a pipeline, I guess, for students to get what they want," Hootsmans said.

**First priority:** Romeo said he would pick students' brains through three avenues in his first week in office: open office hours, student focus groups and a

combination of an online forum and a blog.

"At the end of the week we're going to put all these issues that were posited on a ballot," Romeo said. "We're going to send that out to the student body and we're going to have them give us their feedback as to which they find most important. Based on a ranking, we're going to develop a plan of action."

**Top priority:** Romeo said he does not see one issue as his top concern because his ticket intends to prioritize based on student feedback.

"I don't have a concrete [top priority] because if I'm going to give you one it's going to disregard the whole premise of our platform, which is to get the students' feedback to find out what that is," Romeo said.

Hootsmans said there was one issue the candidates would insist be addressed.

"I think equality is a very big thing for us. It's hard to avoid the issue because you have [GLBTQ] friends and you hear those stories,"

he said. "That's a big thing for us, making sure the [student organization] gets pushed through."

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

**Worst idea:** Decentralizing an already large and complex entity like student government could successfully empower interested students to tackle issues directly but could also result in greater inefficiency and more red tape.

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

**Least feasible:** Bringing bigger acts to B1 Block Party — programmed through Legends, not student government — and distributing weekly student government newsletters.

**Memorable quote:** "There's nothing more beautiful than driving down ND Avenue, looking at the Dome and feeling at home. People being excluded from that community because of factors

outside their control, be it the fact that they're members of the LGBTQ community, be it that they're ethnic minorities, be it the fact that they're from foreign countries, be it the fact they're from economically less privileged families or they're handicapped or for whatever reason, it's tragic to us." - Romeo

**Fun facts:** When Romeo and his family (recently) went to Disneyland, his family wore a different matching t-shirt each day.

Hootsmans has three passports: one South African, one Dutch and one American.

**Bottom line:** While the ticket's lack of student government experience may be a concern, the candidates bring a refreshing level of enthusiasm. With a broad range of experiences on and off campus, they have exceptional insight into the broad interests of students. Their vision for student government serving as a purely representative system offers an opportunity for students to reengage with the sometimes-removed organization.

# Austin O'Brien | Nick Boggess

**Who they are:** Student body presidential candidate Austin O'Brien is a freshman resident of O'Neill Hall from Granger, Ind., who plans to study political science and economics. He is currently creating a community service project as part of the First Year Challenge. Vice presidential candidate Nick Boggess, a freshman accounting major and Education, Schooling and Society minor, is a South Bend native living in Zahm House.

**First priority:** O'Brien and Boggess would take advantage of their full-time residency in the South Bend area to begin working immediately and over the summer to strengthen the relationship between the city and the University to make South Bend a "college town" Notre Dame students want to be a part of.

**Top priority:** To continue the pair's first priority of improving

South Bend as a college town, Boggess said working with the city to "blur the lines" between campus and the greater community to expand the University's influence would be a primary goal.

**Best idea:** O'Brien and Boggess propose creating a council of local university student body presidents to work directly with Mayor Buttigieg to integrate student needs with the greater South Bend community.

**Worst idea:** Creating a "learning commons" to house all academic resources in one facility for all students. Attempting to centralize vaguely specified resources for students in five colleges under one roof makes little logistical or practical sense on Notre Dame's compact campus.

**Most feasible:** O'Brien hopes to engage directly with students regularly in meetings modeled after

South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg's "Mayor's Night Out" sessions.

**Least feasible:** A continually popular yet unsuccessful platform point of prospective student body presidents, O'Brien and Boggess want to expand Flex Point acceptance to include Eddy Street Commons. Nothing in their platform implies they could reverse this trend of rejection.

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

**Notable quote:** "As local residents, we have the benefit of seeing all the angles that you can possibly take, so that's what I feel like would give us a big advantage when it comes to working especially with students here as well as those in



the community." — Boggess, on the merits of living in South Bend year-round

**Bottom line:** The O'Brien-Boggess ticket expresses an admirable desire to integrate Notre Dame with the greater South Bend community, but their ideas are too broad and contain few specific

plans of action to achieve the overarching goal of making South Bend a better college town. Though their perspective as local residents is unique, it diverted the pair's focus too far from on-campus concerns. That said, their initiative in running as freshmen holds promise for future campaigns.

# Alex Coccia | Nancy Joyce



**Who they are:** Presidential candidate Alex Coccia is a junior from Columbus, Ohio, who resides in Siegfried Hall. An African studies and peace studies major, Coccia serves as co-president of the Progressive Student Alliance

and was a founding member of the 4-to-5 Movement on campus. Vice presidential candidate Nancy Joyce, a junior resident of Welsh Family Hall, is an Akron, Ohio, native studying Arabic and economics. She currently serves as Arabic

Club vice president and is a member of Junior Class Council.

**First priority:** Joyce said she and Coccia will immediately focus on "smaller but more concrete" platform items relevant to daily life, such as installing a Redbox on campus.

**Top priority:**

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

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

**Worst idea:** Instituting an

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

**Most feasible:** Coccia and Joyce propose "Student Government Night Out" events to connect student government with the rest of the Notre Dame community in the vein of South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg's "Mayor's Night Out" events.

**Least feasible:** Coccia and Joyce plan to advocate for the inclusion of medical amnesty, Good Samaritan and emergency clauses in official University policies, but these changes could not be accomplished in a year in which du Lac is not eligible for revision.

**Fun facts:** Coccia has bungee jumped on the Nile River. Joyce's

great-grandfather was one of the legendary Four Horsemen of Notre Dame.

**Notable quote:** "I think student government as a whole was created as an advocacy organization, and I don't think it's reached its potential to be that yet and to be the voice for the students to the administration." — Coccia, on the role of student government in campus life

**Bottom line:** The relationships Coccia has formed as a driver of GLBTQ inclusion would provide an invaluable head start toward the ticket's long-term goals through communication and collaboration with University administration. The Coccia-Joyce vision is comprehensive but does not necessarily include any truly groundbreaking ideas.



# The Observer endorses Romeo-Hootsmans

## THE OBSERVER EDITORIAL

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

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

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

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

They’re off to a good start, as they’ve begun their campaign by soliciting ideas for students to construct their platform. In a preliminary list of agenda items, they included suggestions that do reflect the general concerns of the student body. More printing stations around campus, especially in buildings like O’Shaughnessy Hall and DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, have been a longtime

item on student wish lists. Working toward a day concert before a night football game would be a welcome move for students and fans alike. Romeo and Hootsmans identified mental health and stress as serious concerns, and they promised to address them on both in small ways like finals week events and in large ways like promoting University counseling services. One of the strongest platform ideas on the Romeo-Hootsmans ticket is the formation of a formal alumni-student mentorship group, similar to a “Big Brother, Big Sister” program, that could strengthen the work of both the Career Center and

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

the Alumni Association. And while some of these ideas have been attempted before with varying degrees of success, their plan for balloting students would also allow student government to press for its goals with more clout than before — claiming to know what students want works best when students have actually had their say.

In the midst of these smaller ticket items and platform points, Romeo and Hootsmans also understood they would need to address a deeper issue at Notre Dame. In the past year, we have witnessed a racial hate crime on our campus. We have taken steps to be more inclusive to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning

(GLBTQ) students who have felt alienated in the past. The current student government administration dedicated a significant portion of time to consulting with administrators on both the Call to Action plan and the development of a GLBTQ student organization. Romeo and Hootsmans came forward with a passion for making sure those ideals continue to come to fruition in the culture of our campus.

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

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

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

### ELECTION TIMELINE

ELECTION	FEB. 6
RUNOFF DEBATES	FEB. 7
RUNOFF ELECTION	FEB. 11
TERM BEGINS	APRIL 1

### THE CANDIDATES

BILLY CHRISTY AND  
PATRICK ROEMER

ALEX COCCIA AND  
NANCY JOYCE

MICHAEL MASI AND  
TIMOTHY SCANLAN

AUSTIN O’BRIEN AND  
NICK BOGGESS

DOMINIC ROMEO AND  
PHILIP HOOTSMANS

KEVIN SALAT AND  
PAUL MASCARENHAS