

IN FOCUS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2015 | NDSMCOBSERVER.COM



TAKING STOCK

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



TABLE of CONTENTS

PAGE 2

Notre Dame Student Body President and Vice President

PAGE 3

Saint Mary's Student Body President and Vice President

PAGE 4

Student Government Initiative: Sexual Assault
Notre Dame Class Councils

PAGE 5

Student Government Initiative: Onward
Concessions Stands Prices
Saint Mary's Class Boards

PAGE 6

Student Government Initiative: Mental Health

PAGE 7

Student Union Board

PAGE 8

Club Coordination Council

PAGE 9

Notre Dame Student Senate
Hall President's Council

PAGE 10

Saint Mary's SGA Committees

PAGE 12

Notre Dame Department Reviews

ND STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

‘Where we have to go from here’

Ricketts, Ruelas reflect on term to date and look forward to goals for remaining time in office

By CLARE KOSSLER
Associate News Editor

Now more than halfway through their term as student body president and vice president, seniors Bryan Ricketts and Nidia Ruelas are finding their time so far in office to be somewhat different from what they initially expected.

“[Running for office], you do have to think, to believe you’re qualified to do it. But you also believe that what you believe in, and the goals and ideas that you have, are going to make the University better and make students’ lives better. And that is sort of what drives you,” Ricketts said. “I am a very different person than I was April 1. ... There’s no escaping the change that comes with the responsibilities and the interactions that you’re having.”

Ruelas also said her perspective has shifted during her tenure as vice president.

“[I’ve] changed in the way that now I’m looking to be more perceptive and more analytical in thinking about, ‘okay, well what are the implications of this?’” she said. “It’s not just like, ‘just be friendly to everyone and hope everything will work out okay.’ And that’s a huge lesson in leadership and something that I’ve grown in.”

Ricketts and Ruelas won the February election on a platform that focused on student identity and diversity, and with a slogan of “Leading with passion. Working toward unity. Celebrating identity.”

Since taking office in April, Ricketts said he and Ruelas have achieved many of their original platform goals. One area they’ve particularly emphasized, he said, is working as a community to address the issue of sexual assault.

In their platform, Ricketts and Ruelas stated their intention to “support all students, faculty, and staff in proactive efforts to take a stand against sexual assault” and to “continue the message of the ‘It’s On Us’ Campaign through initiatives that promote bystander intervention and encourage reporting and the use of counseling services.”

Over the course of the semester, the administration has continued as planned with the “It’s On Us” campaign originally launched by last year’s administration, and has also submitted a 30-page report on sexual assault – comprising interviews with students, staff and administrators, as well as a number of recommendations – to the University’s Board of Trustees.

“‘It’s On Us’ and the sexual violence board report, I would definitely put up there at the top as something that we’ve worked very hard on, as something that we care a lot about as something that the students care a lot about,” Ricketts said.

In addition to their initiatives on sexual assault, Ruelas said she and Ricketts have also followed

through on another one of their campaign promises: the launch of Onward, an online forum for students to submit ideas and voice concerns over current issues on campus. Ricketts described Onward as the “fruit of months of conversations with administrators and faculty across the campus,” and said student government has already received useful input from students using the site, particularly concerning food services. He said, however, that in many ways Onward is still a work in progress.

“I think where we have to go from here, and where we need to improve, is once the ideas are up [on Onward] and we’re working on implementation, how do we effectively structure them to demonstrate to students what a realistic timeline looks like?” he said. “When an idea comes up, there’s a significant period of investment of time and sometimes money into making that happen, so working on how we can be more transparent about that process I think is going to be the key next semester in terms of the success of Onward.”

One objective from their platform that requires further attention, Ruelas said, is the promotion of initiatives regarding diversity and inclusion on campus. She said a November panel student government co-sponsored with the Diversity Council to kick off the “It’s Time ND” campaign – a campaign to encourage dialogue on the issues of diversity and inclusion on campus – had fewer numbers of students in attendance than she hoped.

“I think that that’s something that we were reevaluating afterward and we were like, you know what, we could have done more on this in the sense of really using the connections that we have with other students to gather feedback on what we could do better ... and also hopefully improve the conversation so that it’s more representative of what students want to talk about,” Ruelas said.

In addition to working to achieve the goals they outlined for their administration in the spring, Ricketts said he and Ruelas have also had to refocus their attention on several newly-emerging issues.

In particular, Ricketts said, both academics and student services have surprised him as two of the more prominent issues during his time in office.

“I think there’s been a stronger focus on academics than ever anticipated, because we realized the need for student voice in that area,” Ricketts said. “The other big one has been student services.

“... Whoever’s coming next, I think the best advice I could give them is that whatever you want to do, the little things that make student life better, they often aren’t what you think you’re going to be able to achieve.

“You just get an opportunity, and you have to jump on it. That’s what



MICHAEL YU | The Observer

Student body president and vice president Bryan Ricketts and Nidia Ruelas took office April 1. They said they hope to leave a legacy of “respect and professionalism.”

happened with the concession stands, that’s what happened with the prices in the huddle. We saw an opening, we said okay, this is going to make student’s lives better — let’s go for it. It’s kind of hard to plan out what those things are going to be, it’s just more having the mentality of looking for ways that this is going to make students’ lives better.”

Both Ruelas and Ricketts cited the enthusiasm and dedication of their department directors and staff as one of the major strengths of their administration.

“You never know how it’s going to go when you’re coming in,” Ricketts said. “You do the best you can to pick a team. You think you’ve got the right people, but you don’t know until the rover hits the road, and they’ve done a fantastic job at meeting our goals and at meeting their goals.”

Ruelas said other administration members have grown throughout the semester in their ability to work together as cohesive unit.

“We definitely bounce things off of each other, especially major decisions. That’s critical,” Ruelas said. “And I think that we complement each other very well in terms of perspectives and personalities, too, I think. What’s the same is our values, and that, I think, has also been super important.”

Ricketts said the current administration has also learned from the work of previous administrations, particularly regarding student involvement in initiatives.

“I think from previous administrations, we inherited the recognition that your initiatives and your goals are only successful insofar as they are student-centered and student-focused,” Ricketts said. “So recognizing that It’s On Us can’t be successful without students, by, you know, just us, recognizing that [student involvement] had to be a central principle of Onward, I think we inherited a lot of that.”

And in turn, Ricketts said he wants to leave to future

administrations a legacy of “respect and professionalism.”

“I hope what we leave when we move on is some sort of respect and professionalism,” he said. “We’ve done our best to treat this as a professional office, as a professional job when we do our work — especially with administrators and with people outside — to treat

it like we’re getting paid to do this job, to treat it with the utmost respect. And I hope that that displays not only how much we care about the issues, but how ready we are to engage on behalf of the student body.”

Contact Clare Kossler at
ckossler@nd.edu

GRADE: B+

Ricketts and Ruelas have had several major successes this semester, including the submission of the report on sexual assault to the Board of Trustees and the continuation of It's On Us. However, two major items from their original platform — promoting diversity and encouraging a dialogue on student identity — seem to have been overshadowed by other considerations. Furthermore, there still appears to be a lack of cohesiveness and unified purpose to their administration. The success of Onward will be central to defining their administration next semester.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

ONLY 3 MINUTES FROM CAMPUS

Little Caesars®

HOT-N-READY®

LARGE PIZZA

\$5

CHEESE OR PEPPERONI

•Original Round •Carry out •Plus tax

NOW OPEN! 933 & CLEVELAND • 855-4009

HICKORY CROSSING PLAZA

3601 Edison Road at Hickory • 243-4680

SMC STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

‘The voice of the students’

Baker, Kohler speak out on divisive topics, encourage respect for all students’ viewpoints

By **HALEIGH EHMSSEN**
Saint Mary’s Editor

In the beginning of their term as student body president and vice president, seniors Kaitlyn Baker and Maddie Kohler set goals to collaborate with Notre Dame, increase campus safety and be transparent, and now at the end of the semester Baker said new initiatives have propelled those goals forward.

This year, Baker said campus safety has been one of Student Government Association’s (SGA) main initiatives this semester.

She said there has been a minor setback with updating the app in the Apple App Store, but they hope it will be ready to download for the spring semester.

Another initiative Baker and Kohler campaigned for was collaboration among the tri-campus community.

Baker said they meet monthly with Notre Dame’s student government. It can be difficult, she said, because Notre Dame’s student government functions very differently from Saint Mary’s.

On the subject of working with their respective administrations (or boards of trustees), Baker said the student governments of Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s differ greatly.

Members of the SGA leadership get to meet with the Board of Trustees every time they come to campus to update the Board on campus happenings and issues, whereas Notre Dame student government only gets to bring one issue as a formal proposal to their Board of Trustees each year.

Kohler said one new initiative, the “Big Belle, Little Belle” program chaired by the First Year

Concerns committee, pairs a juniors with first-year students.

More first-year students signed up than juniors, Kohler said, so SGA reached out to seniors to mentor the newest students. The program allows older students to mentor the newest Belles and provide the sense of the sisterhood the College prides itself on.

SGA expects this program to become a Saint Mary’s tradition, Baker said, which allows the “big” and “little” pair to spend time together doing a variety of activities throughout the year.

Food Week was also a huge success this year, Kohler said, with themed dinners each night and a food truck arriving on campus at the end of the week.

Students were able to purchase meal tickets in the dining hall and get their dinner from a food truck for another option.

The SGA Finance Committee, led by vice president of finance senior Shannon Golden, has changed this year, Baker said. The committee is now made up of the class senators, two from each class, including one senator at large from the graduate program.

“This committee of senators reviews all requests for SGA funding and can decide to approve or deny [requests.]” Baker said. “We worked with [2014-2015 SGA president] McKenna [Schuster] and [vice president] Sam [Moorhead] at the end of their term last year to rewrite the finance outlaws because they were severely outdated.”

From this budget, the “big” boards including Student Activities Board (SAB), Student Diversity Board (SDB), Residence Hall Association (RHA) and SGA are allotted a

percentage of the total budget that comes from student fees included in tuition.

“As of right now, Senate meets on a need basis,” Baker said. “They met in the beginning of the year to approve the budgets and they will meet again before the semester ends.”

Instead of promoting to SMCARD that last year’s administration started, Baker said SGA has invested in ID scanners to track attendance at events.

Students scan their IDs at events, which electronically tracks the number of students attending.

Baker said the scanner helps with planning and improving events, more than incentivizing attendance like past SMCARDs.

“With the scanner, we can look at what are the events students are going to and allows to prioritize where funds should go,” she said.

Since much of SGA funds comes from the student fees, Baker said, the scanners provide data on successful events and events that may need more planning.

In response to the Planned Parenthood controversy in November, Baker released a statement about the importance of heeding all student voices.

“I also believe that there are two sides to every story, and in most cases, even more than two sides,” Baker said in her statement. “It is important for us as young women to be well-educated and then given the freedom to think critically about what we have learned, form our own opinions and stand up for what we believe is right.”

Baker said her statement was about respect on campus and confronting controversial topics

as a community.

“As a student leader, [I] needed to respond,” she said. “[Planned Parenthood] was a big topic for several weeks. To not say anything about it would have been ignorant if we’re supposed to be the voice of the students and advocate for students.

“Anytime there’s a controversial topic, people are opinionated. But the most important thing was reiterate that we’re all still Belles and should have respect for the community.”

Last week, SGA and SDB hosted a student dialogue event, closed to faculty, staff and the media.

The idea for the student dialogue followed campus controversy about Planned Parenthood, but also in light of the harassment junior Maranda Pennington faced when a homophobic slur was written on her whiteboard.

“We broadened the event to be an opportunity to discuss all of the types of controversy that have been occurring and how we can move forward, make changes and be better as

a community,” Baker said.

Students had the opportunity to voice their opinions, she said, but at the end of the event, all students in the room recognized the importance of their fellow Belles.

Kohler said SGA hopes the event was a learning opportunity for students who attended.

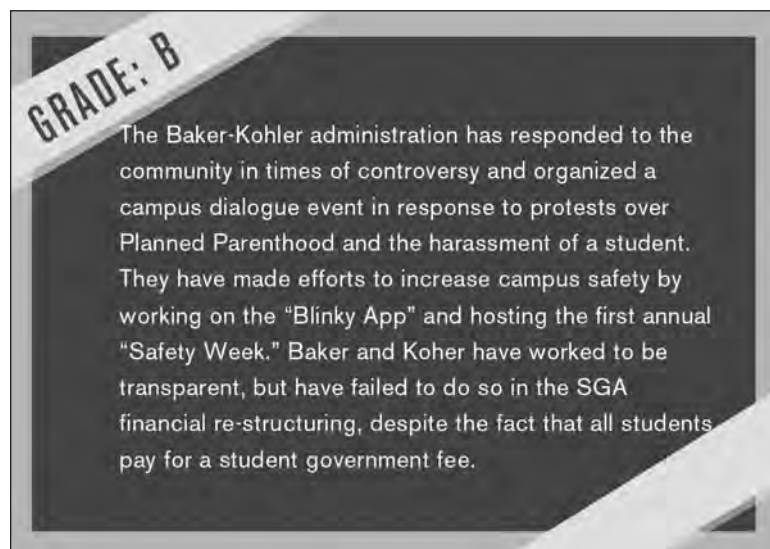
“We [closed] the event knowing that we are still one community [and] it’s okay that we are at a Catholic institution and have different beliefs,” she said.

Each year the College focuses on one of the four core values: faith/spirituality, justice, community and learning. This year, Kohler said, the College has chosen community. In response, SGA has been encouraging committee chairs to think about this year’s core value when planning their events.

The student dialogue was an example of SGA’s dedication to community, she said.

“We are trying to engage the community and keep all students in the know,” Kohler said.

Contact **Haleigh Ehmsen** at hehmse01@saintmarys.edu



BIG BELLE, LITTLE BELLE

Program promotes sisterhood, community

By **MARTHA REILLY**
News Writer

There may not be any Greek life in South Bend, but the “Big Belle, Little Belle” initiative at Saint Mary’s promotes a sisterly bond, allowing upperclassmen to help first-years transition into life at the College.

Co-chairs of the first year concerns committee, sophomore Caroline Koenig and junior Taylor Lashbrook, collaborated to assemble the program, according to Koenig. She said the juniors and seniors who serve as Big Belles bond with their assigned littles through events such as craft nights, highlighting the supportive environment of Saint Mary’s.

“Trying to connect the first-years and the upperclassmen

can be hard at times because there are things that separate them,” Koenig said. “To bring everyone together, to make more connections and to make more friends is a very positive thing for the community.”

An overwhelming number of first-years signed up, so the program, which would initially have included only junior Big Belles, broadened to incorporate seniors as well, Koenig said.

“You make all these friends so fast, and you get thrown into the crazy different environment that college is,” she said. “We felt that we needed people who are already grounded, people who already know who they are in college, to lend a helping hand.”

Koenig said she and Lashbrook made an effort to

pair girls with common interests, such as the same major, making it easy for first-years to receive pertinent advice. Based loosely on the sorority concept of having an older sister, who serves as a role-model, “Big Belle, Little Belle” aims to promote relationships between grade levels, Koenig said. She also said the success of this year’s launch helped identify ways to improve the program in following years.

“We have a lot of ideas for how it’s going to flow next year and how we want to make it bigger and better,” Koenig said. “We’re still trying to work out a bit of the kinks since it is such a new program, and we had such a big turnout.”

Junior Katie Slisz said she feels fortunate to mentor two

Little Belles, as she enjoys interacting with and learning from younger students.

“It’s nice to be able to get to know freshmen and expand your base of the connection with people you know in college,” Slisz said. “Instead of staying with my own group of friends or people I know from class, I’m able to meet people outside of that.”

Slisz said she enjoys referring back to her own experiences so she can advise students and ease any difficulties they may have while adjusting to the college environment.

“Personally, it was kind of scary coming in because I didn’t know anyone initially,” Slisz said. “It’s nice to have the ability to reach out to them. It really is such a great

community-builder.”

Slisz said so far Big Belles have made crafts — including door decorations and booklets with useful tips — for their mentees to promote a comfortable relationship with open communication. She said participating in the program has given her friends she would not have made otherwise, while granting her the chance to make their college experience the best it can possibly be.

“A lot of our core values are about sharing in a bond and working to build people up,” Slisz said. “This really is a great way to form positive relationships where we can be helping one another.”

Contact **Martha Reilly** at mreilly01@saintmarys.edu

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Administration seeks to improve assault response

By CATHERINE OWERS
Associate News Editor

When students received two emails from Notre Dame Security Police (NDSP) reporting three incidents of sexual violence on campus in the first two weeks of the fall semester, the issue of sexual assault in the Notre Dame community was once again highlighted.

With the continuation of the “It’s On Us” campaign and participation in the launch of the GreeNDot violence prevention program, student government has prioritized raising awareness and sparking dialogue about sexual violence on campus. On Oct. 15, student body president Bryan Ricketts and vice president Nidia Ruelas presented a report to the Board of Trustees on the current state of sexual violence at Notre Dame and how the University can further work to solve the issue.

Ricketts said he identifies student government’s response to sexual assault as one of the strengths of his and Ruelas’ administration.

“It’s On Us’ and the sexual violence Board report, I would definitely put up there at the top as something that we’ve worked very hard on, as something that we care a lot about as something that the students care a lot about,” he said.

The Board of Trustees report focused on four major topics: campus conversation surrounding sexual violence, the trajectory of change on the issue at Notre Dame, alcohol culture’s role in sexual violence and a process overview, supplemented by students’ experiences. It concluded with a series of recommendations to Trustees on how to curb sexual violence on campus, as well as how to improve the process of reporting and navigating the

Title IX process.

Ruelas said continuing conversations on sexual assault are critical, even when students are not receiving email notifications of sexual violence on campus.

“That’s something we’ve thought about, and I think a whole lot of it has been being intentional about talking about it, not being scared of having these conversations, as student leaders,” she said. “It goes back to utilizing our networks and influence as student leaders, working with other student leaders too, to make sure they feel comfortable talking about difficult topics like sexual assault, sexual violence on campus.”

Small efforts can have a significant impact on creating a campus culture more open to conversations about sexual violence, Ruelas said.

“I know I’m very intentional about mentioning it at hall council. Something as simple as having an announcement at Mass, now it’s a permanent petition in Mass — it’s a constant reminder that this plagues our community. And it’s something we should all be conscious about, as a community, in the sense that as active bystanders, whether you got an email a week ago or two years ago, [you should be concerned],” she said.

Ricketts said student government’s goal is to put as many structures in place as possible to foster natural student engagement on this salient issue.

“Whether it’s Men Against Sexual Violence, or FIRE Starters or Notre Dame student groups who have a space to come forward when we’re doing ‘It’s On Us,’ when it comes to GreeNDot and we’re saying we’re going to make these videos ...,” he said, “We try to look at it from a structural



GRACE TOURVILLE | The Observer

Fr. Pat Reidy speaks to students at the Grotto on Nov. 16 at a sexual assault prayer service. Student body president Bryan Ricketts identified this administration’s response to sexual assault as one of its strengths.

perspective, and say, ‘What do we have? What are the resources to change these structures that will allow people to come forward?’

“The prayer services, for example — we evaluated our communications policy on that, which have improved attendance for the past year. We definitely take a structural look at how we can foster that natural feeling that’s out there, that this is an issue, and how we can help people come forward.”

Student government has tried to played a large role in creating student body engagement on the issue, the director of the department of gender issues, junior Danny Funaro, said in an interview last month.

Funaro said the department of gender issues has participated in the GreeNDot launch and worked on promoting the “It’s On Us” campaign, the University’s iteration of the national movement commissioned by the White House to end sexual violence on college campuses.

“It’s On Us’ tries to get people to take ownership of the

issue, so the main thing that goes with that is the ‘It’s On Us’ pledge,” he said. “Pledge cards were last year’s version of this pledge — this year we’ve put more of a focus on the itsonus.nd.edu pledge.”

More than 200 students have signed the pledge this year, Funaro said. The department hopes to have more than 400 students sign by the end of the semester.

“The main way we’ve done that is by going door-to-door in different dorms,” he said. “You can actually get good conversations with people ... [and] get people that really want to get involved.”

Funaro said he has noticed there is sometimes more difficulty getting men involved in programming and campaigns to end sexual violence.

“To get the general male population involved is a little bit harder, but I think we’ve made inroads in that, versus last year, when the ‘It’s On Us’ pledge was signed mostly by women,” he said. “This year there’s a much better balance.”

Ruelas said that student

government has made it a priority to demonstrate they are serious about ending sexual assault on Notre Dame’s campus, primarily through the presentation to the Board of Trustees and participating in the launch of GreeNDot. Ricketts said the letters written by University president Fr. John Jenkins and vice president for student affairs Erin Hoffmann-Harding last spring regarding the University’s intolerance for sexual assault have contributed to a positive culture of change.

“Their public commitments are a contrast to other universities, where you just don’t see that, it’s just the students. I think we have a good working relationship with a lot of individuals, and there are culture change issues that need to be addressed here, there are policy issues that need to be addressed here. The fact that we’re able to have that conversation and not find ourselves shut down, I think, says a lot,” Ricketts said.

Contact Catherine Owers at cowers@nd.edu

ND CLASS COUNCILS

FRESHMAN CLASS COUNCIL	SOPHOMORE CLASS BOARD	JUNIOR CLASS COUNCIL	SENIOR CLASS COUNCIL
<p>The Freshman Class Council began the semester by hosting a Halloween Dance. Shortly before Thanksgiving, the council encouraged students to write what they were thankful for on hand turkey cutouts, which were compiled to form one large “Turkey of Thankfulness,” displayed in the LaFortune Student Center. The council hopes to create a recurring religious and service-oriented event next semester to memorialize Rebecca Townsend, a member of the class of 2019 who died before the school year began.</p> <p>“We’re hoping that we can really grow closer as a class,” president Michael Conlon said. “That’s our end goal, and we’re hoping that by the time we reflect on this year, at the end of the year, that we achieved that.”</p>	<p>The Sophomore Class Council began the semester with the annual Gatsby Dance, which included a full orchestra, a live swing band and a tutorial led by Notre Dame’s Swing Dance Club. The council is currently selling class of 2018-themed ornaments bearing a logo designed by a fellow sophomore. For the upcoming semester, the council is starting an initiative with the local Boys and Girls Club in which will go one Friday per month members will participate in the club’s playtime.</p> <p>“The point of that initiative and service project is to get the sophomore class more involved here in the South Bend community to make sure that we’re getting to know the community that has become our home,” vice president Molly Knapp said.</p> <p>In January, the council will be holding an event in an attempt to earn the world record for largest tournament of knockout basketball.</p>	<p>The Junior Class Council entered the semester with the goal of hosting events to appeal to a larger variety of students than before. The council also sponsored “Make a Difference Week,” during which students were able to send candy grams to friends, appreciation letters to dorm presidents and gifts to dorm housekeepers. As part of the week, the council also held a Halloween-themed dance with local South Bend children with developmental disabilities, encouraged an experimental tray-less day in both dining halls and promoted a blood drive to benefit a local blood bank.</p> <p>The council also hosted a study abroad letter-writing event, during which students could write letters to friends abroad, and the council covered the cost of sending the letters internationally.</p>	<p>The Senior Class Council has hosted large-scale events to unite the entire senior class throughout its final year. “With so many seniors living off campus, our focus turned from just hosting events to deliberately bringing on and off campus students together,” president Tommy Schneeman said.</p> <p>The council started the year with a class trip to Four Winds Field to see a South Bend Cubs game and then commemorated the seniors’ final home football game by hosting an event the Friday afternoon before the game for seniors and their families to enjoy food, raffle prizes, a photo booth and performances by the Irish Dance Team and Notre Dame cheerleaders. The council also held a Senior Night at Legends of Notre Dame.</p>

ONWARD

Online platform promotes student engagement

By **SELENA PONIO**
News Writer

Onward is an online forum for students to submit and vote on ideas for improving the University. The forum was initially announced as part of student body president and vice president Bryan Ricketts

“[Onward] keeps us accountable to the students, and it keeps the students accountable to their ideas.”

John Kill
director
department of constituent
services

and Nidia Ruelas’ campaign platform, and was launched through student government’s website on Sept. 29.

Accessed through student-government.nd.edu and requiring a Notre Dame login, students can submit ideas as well as up-vote or down-vote ideas that they like or dislike, as well as respond to posts by other students. All posts begin with the tag “ideation stage,” but can gain “implementation” status when student government begins to look into moving forward with them.

Constituent services director John Kill said the development of Onward is a gradual process, and the forum provides a unique opportunity for students to be involved in the discussion and implementation of new ideas.

“It’s early still but as we continue to define how we want Onward to be used ... I think we will see an incredible

increase in student body involvement ... to make this University a better place,” he said.

The staff in constituent services is getting in the habit of consistently publishing reports that contain the top ideas on Onward, Kill said.

“We’re not quite sure how often we’ll publish reports, but we’re thinking every four to six weeks, we’ll have a report that will evaluate the top 10 ideas,” Kill said. “[Onward] keeps us accountable to the students, and it keeps the students accountable to their ideas.”

Campus technology director Michael McRoskey, who was involved in the technological process of creating Onward, said the best comparison for it was an idea-sharing platform that shared layout similarities with the social media site Yik Yak.

“We partnered with OIT to use this idea-share service, and people can sign in with their net IDs,” McRoskey said. “We wanted to give students the opportunity ... to be empowered. This is kind of like removing the barrier, and you can post your ideas right from your dorm room [with] the most popular ideas being upvoted.”

McRoskey is also in the process of launching student government’s new website in the upcoming weeks. He said the current website lacked engaging content and visuals.

“We took the current website and totally refreshed it, so that it’s more dynamic and shows what’s happening on Onward. It’s very visual and mobile friendly,” McRoskey said.

The website’s main purpose

is to show students that student government is working for them and to showcase newly implemented ideas and accomplishments, McRoskey said.

“People can see what student government does because a lot of people don’t

“It empowers students to share their ideas and ... sort of refine them. It’s not just complaining, because people comment on that idea ... and work towards synthesizing a solution.”

Michael McRoskey
director
department of campus
technology

understand what student government does behind the scenes,” McRoskey said.

He said Onward provides an interactive platform for students and their representatives to communicate and talk about student concerns and possible solutions. McRoskey said some popular topics feature on Onward are prices in The Huddle, the printing quota and various complaints with food services.

“It empowers students to share their ideas and ... sort of refine them,” McRoskey said. “It’s not just complaining because people comment on that idea ... and work towards synthesizing a solution.”

Contact Selena Ponio at sponio@nd.edu

CONCESSION STAND PRICES

Concession stand prices drop for students

By **EMMA BORNE**
News Writer

In an effort to improve the football game day experience, student government took on a project to lower concession prices at Notre Dame Stadium for students over the summer.

Student body chief of staff Dan Sehlhorst said in an email that he and student body president Bryan Ricketts collaborated with Auxiliary Services and the concession stand vendor for Notre Dame Stadium to lower the prices.

“Many students viewed the old prices as designed for parents and fans. ... Being on a college budget, [they] reacted by thinking, ‘These aren’t for me,’” Sehlhorst said.

“The new prices are designed to make eating a snack during games more of a possibility for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds.”

Sehlhorst said he and Ricketts submitted ideas for combos, which offer more food for less money, as well as ideas for seasonal snacks. Lowering the price of water in the stadium was their top concern, Selhorst said, because higher water prices are not only an affordability concern, but also a health concern.

“The separate menu includes combos and reduced prices for drinks and other small snacks. The student menu is accessible in select locations near the student section with a student ID card,” he said.

The student combo options included a popcorn box and souvenir soda for \$5 (a savings of \$5) hot dog, chips and souvenir soda for \$7 (saving

\$5) candy, pretzel and souvenir soda for \$9 (saving \$3.50) and chicken tender basket and souvenir soda for \$10 (saving \$3.50), according to a stadium menu. Apple cider was available for \$2 and trail mix and cookies were each sold for \$1. The price of bottled water dropped from \$2 to \$1.

Student government helped make the lower prices available for the first home game this year against Texas, Sehlhorst said.

“Game day is a special experience for students, and it wouldn’t be the same without students, so we want to ensure

“The new prices are designed to make eating a snack ... a possibility for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds.”

Dan Sehlhorst
chief of staff
student government

everything about the game day experience welcomes all of our students,” he said.

As the home game football season has come to a close, Sehlhorst said student government is submitting snack and drink price recommendations to Auxiliary Services and the concession stand vendor in order to continue improving the game day experience for students next year and in the future.

Contact Emma Borne at eborne@nd.edu

SMC CLASS BOARDS

FIRST-YEAR CLASS BOARD

The First-Year Class Board plans to host events and fundraisers to bring the class together and have a good time while also raising money for their senior week. First-Year class president Sofia Scott said she is excited about her board of 12 and believes they can accomplish a lot in their time serving the class. The board is hosting their first event before finals for the class to watch the movie “Elf” and enjoy refreshments. The board hopes to host a snow-tubing trip for the entire school in the spring semester, as well as hosting a color run on campus. For fundraising, the board is selling knit winter headbands and hopes to sell more merchandise next semester.

SOPHOMORE CLASS BOARD

The Sophomore Class Board’s goal for the 2015-2016 school year is to bring the class together by holding events specifically for the sophomore class. Sophomore class vice president Courtney Weston said the Sophomore Class Board has already hosted Sophomore Parents’ weekend and a fall event. The board plans to host “Cookies, Cocoa, Cram,” before finals week, an event where students can snack and listen to Christmas music while doing homework and studying for exams. Weston said the board also plans to host a karaoke night and a Super Bowl watch party next semester. The Super Bowl party would be a collaboration between the other class boards, Weston said. Two bake sales have occurred to raise money for the sophomore class’s senior week, she said.

JUNIOR CLASS BOARD

Since the class boards no longer fall under the purview of the Student Government Association (SGA), Junior Class Board president Maggie Carswell said the Junior Class Board has undergone a significant transition. This year the board has been reorganizing, having conversations about the next step for the board and envisioning in what direction the class boards should go. The junior class has been fundraising and planning for Junior Moms’ weekend. Carswell also said the board is planning events for next semester in the hopes of making more people from the junior class feel included.

SENIOR CLASS BOARD

The Saint Mary’s Senior Class Board wants to create a fun and memorable senior week for the entire class to remember. Senior class president CoCo Craig said her board of 14 focuses its efforts on fundraising for senior week, as well as brainstorming events to host during that week. She said in previous years, senior week has included a trip to a Chicago Cubs game, and she wants to try to do something similar again this year. The board also hopes to organize a senior formal for the class in the spring. For fundraising, the board sold bucket hats with the Saint Mary’s French Cross and plans to sell Saint Mary’s decals that say “Home” and feature artwork. The board hosted the annual Senior Dads’ Weekend in the fall.

MENTAL HEALTH

Student government pushes for ‘culture change’

By KATIE GALIOTO
News Writer

The department of health and wellness spent its inaugural semester working to find ways to foster conversations about mental health issues on campus, department director sophomore Rohit Fonseca said.

Student body president Bryan Ricketts and vice president Nidia Ruelas introduced the idea of adding the department of health and wellness last February as part of their campaign platform. Over the course of the semester, their administration has implemented and contributed to a variety of initiatives to raise awareness about mental health issues at Notre Dame.

“We started looking at other colleges and what they’re doing. It made us realize that wellness is a growing field and an area where our University is growing,” Ricketts said. “Student government should mirror that growth.”

Fonseca said one of the goals of the department of health and wellness is to inform students about mental health through programs such as Irish State of Mind Week and the “Just Ask” campaign.

Irish State of Mind Week, hosted by student government in collaboration with Notre Dame’s chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-ND), recognized National Mental Illness Awareness Week. Events throughout the week were designed to spark conversations across campus about mental health.

Student government launched the “Just Ask” campaign, an ACC-wide campaign focused on raising mental health awareness, in an video emailed to students on Oct. 11.

Fonseca said the campaign was one of the results of the ACC Student Leadership Conference hosted at Notre Dame last year.

“The ‘Just Ask’ campaign encourages people — if you notice something’s wrong with your friend, or if you know someone’s having a bad day — to just ask them what’s wrong,” he said. “We also include information in there about the counseling center and resources that are available on campus.”

A video about the campaign will be shown in each Moreau First-Year Experience course, Fonseca said.

“It’s really to help get the message out to people,” he said. “We know we’ll be reaching one-fourth of the student body when all the

freshmen see the video.”

Ricketts and Ruelas said student engagement in discussions about mental health topics is an area in need of improvement.

“Where I would say sexual assault has been more of a ‘home run’ issue with lots of student engagement, we’re still in the education phase with mental health and mental illness,” Ricketts said.

“We want to get to the place where [mental health is] important to students, and it’s something they value as much as GPAs, or resumes, or other things that people put the premium on here.”

Rohit Fonseca
director
department of health and
wellness

“How to bring that education to a broader setting is something we’re still working on.”

As student government continues to encourage conversations about mental health, Fonseca said he hopes the topic will gain the same levels of attention sexual assault has received.

“Beforehand, we didn’t feel that there was a real conversation about [sexual assault], but now, due to recent events and initiatives that student government has done, in addition to the emails sent out and prayer services, it’s really become a productive conversation on campus that people are passionate about,” he said. “We’d like to have the same thing happen for mental health.”

Ricketts and Ruelas student government plans to address mental health issues in a similar way to conversations around sexual assault at Notre Dame.

“I think that, like sexual assault, the bigger area to work on in regards to mental health is culture change,” Ruelas said. “That’s going to take a while.”

In addition to health and wellness initiatives, Ricketts and Ruelas compiled student government’s research and recommendations on mental health at Notre Dame in a memo presented to the Board of Trustees this fall. Since the memo, two colleges started forming training programs to better educate their faculty about mental health and how to address it in the classroom, Ricketts said.

“We saw some immediate impacts, but we also realize

that with some of the work we did, we’re just planting seeds,” he said. “There’s not the institutional readiness yet to do all these things. ... I think these things will happen. But in the meantime, we’ve only been able to plant the seed.

“That’s one of the harder things about this position. You leave some things behind with the hope that this is going to grow.”

The department of health and wellness plans to start a poster campaign next semester to continue to raise awareness about mental health, Fonseca said. The department is also working with other University organizations to inform students about mental health and the resources available on campus, such as the new McDonald Center for Student Well-Being (McWell Center).

“We’ve been collaborating and building a relationship with the McWell Center, in addition to Campus Ministry and the department of residence life, and we’re trying to put together a holistic health and wellness blog where people could go for all their health and wellness questions,” he said.

Fonseca said the department hopes to launch the blog early next semester.



CHRIS COLLINS | The Observer

Sophomore Neil Lewis speaks at “In Our Own Words” in the LaFortune Student Center Ballroom on Oct. 6.

The next step of their administration’s work on mental health is to turn the awareness into action, Ricketts said.

“We’re trying to make sure that we’re tying our conversations ‘Just Ask’ and mental health into the broader understanding of bystander intervention that’s happening in Moreau and that’s happening ‘It’s On Us,’” Ricketts said. “... That’s the next step of it — really engaging individuals.”

Fonseca said the health

and wellness department promotes the University’s mission with its focus on the mind.

“Obviously, you come to Notre Dame for an education,” he said. “... We want to get to the place where [mental health is] important to students, and it’s something they value as much as GPAs, or resumes, or other things that people put the premium on here.”

Contact Katie Galioto at
kgalioto@nd.edu

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

HOLIDAY BOOK SALE

On sale now thru
December 31, 2015

40% discount on all UNDP titles

@
undpress.nd.edu

Use sale code HOLIDAY2015 in shopping
cart for discount to apply.

Happy Holidays!

University of Notre Dame Press • Questions: 574-631-4910

STUDENT UNION BOARD

SUB adds new programming, hosts artists

By **RACHEL O'GRADY**
News Writer

After a year that prompted major organizational changes, the Student Union Board (SUB) has already put on one sold-out concert and several other successful events, according to Alan Whalen, director of marketing.

"This has been a big year for SUB so far, with our first ever fall concert and several other big events already under our belt," Whalen said. "Throughout this semester we have launched a brand new website with enhanced emphasis on user experience, created a snapchat account, launched paid advertising campaigns on Facebook, and redesigned the face of SUB with new name tags, banners and free merchandise to give away to students."

Between raising campus awareness about upcoming activities and monitoring SUB's many social media accounts, Whalen said he is constantly promoting events of every size.

"It's been a busy year, but these new publicity investments have paid huge dividends in the number of students we have been able to reach. Our first ever fall concert was the best

attended in recent history with over 1600 tickets sold, and we have dramatically increased our following on all forms of social media," Whalen said.

In order to generate this publicity, Whalen works closely with Alexandra Ignacio, director of art.

"So I'm in charge of all the printed material that comes out of SUB, so all the pretty things you see around campus, those are the products of me and my designers," Ignacio said. "I really emphasize professionalism in our work. ... I've told my designers, you know, I'm going to send you these really nit-picky emails about legibility or color scheme or whatever but it's because we want to give off this air of professionalism."

Ignacio said this attention to detail benefits all of SUB, and she is impressed with the output so far.

"It's just so important, when you're making something for the student body, to make sure it's well done, because you know, if it isn't well made, people are going to think, you know, 'oh, it's not a big deal, because they didn't even spend time on this' and obviously that's not the case," Ignacio said. "So that's what I've been



CAITLYN JORDAN | The Observer

Country musician Hunter Hayes plays in Stepan Center on Nov. 6 to a sold-out crowd. Hayes came to Notre Dame in the first ever SUB fall concert. The group plans to bring another artist to campus in the spring.

emphasizing and I've been so amazed at my designers, they do such great work."

For anyone unclear about what SUB does, one of the directors of programming, Kaya Moore, said it's best to think of SUB as the "fun arm of student government."

Another director of programming, Abby Shepard, added her agreement.

"The purpose of SUB is to provide cool, fun and

exciting events for the student body in order to enrich student life," Shepard said. "I think SUB definitely contributes to the community atmosphere of Notre Dame because we provide events where students can meet and just have fun."

Looking to next semester, Whalen said the SUB team is excited about a number of events.

"I'm looking forward to so many things this semester. ... Spring is an amazing time to be in SUB because there are so many big events coming up, with the Collegiate Jazz Festival, Spring Concert and AnTostal. This spring semester is going to be a big one," Whalen said.

Sheppard oversees the Collegiate Jazz Festival, the oldest college jazz festival in the country.

"It's an honor to be part of such a tradition," she said. "Although the festival isn't

until the end of February, SUB is hard at work and there has already been a lot of progress from behind the scenes, we already have judges, school performances, and designs confirmed, which is earlier than we have had a lot of the logistics worked out in past years."

Overall, executive director Louis Bertolotti said he has been impressed with his team's work.

"You know, I came into this as an outsider, and we underwent all these changes to the structure of how SUB works and it's been functioning so well so far," Bertolotti said. "We had incredible turnout for Hunter Hayes, and I'm really excited what we've got coming next semester."

(Editor's note: Louis Bertolotti is an Observer Viewpoint columnist.)

Contact Rachel O'Grady at rogrady@nd.edu

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Elegance. Glamour. Charm.



Jennifer Mayo Photography



SEBphotography.com



Peter Thurn Photography

A ballroom like no other, the Palais Royale is your ideal wedding reception venue. Historic charm. Modern elegance. A perfect combination of old and new await you.

Palais Royale
South Bend's
Premier Event Facility

www.PalaisRoyale.org

574-235-5612

2015 New Year's Eve
Dinner/Dance Party
Thursday, Dec. 31

The Tom Milo Big Band
Hors d'oeuvres * Fine Dining * Midnight Champagne Toast



Tickets Sold at
Morris Box Office
574-235-9190
www.MorrisCenter.org

Photo by Peter Ringenberg

GRADE: A

This semester, SUB has continued a number of existing annual events – for example Dogs and Donuts and AcoustiCafe – but has also introduced new programming, including the sold-out fall concert featuring country star Hunter Hayes. The next semester should prove more challenging for SUB as it plans AnTostal and the annual spring concert, but for this semester, SUB has had a generally positive impact on student life.

Follow us on Twitter.
@ObserverNDSMC



CLUB COORDINATION COUNCIL

CCC updates bylaws, allocates funding

By **MATTHEW McKENNA**
News Writer

Club Coordination Council (CCC) president Marisa Thompson said the CCC is one of the most underutilized student government groups on campus.

"When people want something done in their hall, they go to their Hall Council," she said. "When they want some type of event programming on campus, they go to SUB. But when a club wants to achieve a goal on campus, often, they don't know where to turn."

The group plays a number of roles in the administration of clubs on campus, she said.

"The CCC is involved in undergraduate club activity on campus in the forms of monetary allocation, prospective club approval and student government representation," Thompson said.

In addition to an administrative role, Thompson said the group also acts as a voice for the interests of clubs in various organizations across campus.

"It represents club interests to SAO, the Financial Management Board, senate and the Executive Programming Board. It is composed of 27 undergraduate members and one SAO advisor.

She said there are three executive board members: Thompson, vice president Will Fields and controller Aaron Vernon.

Thompson said there are also six divisions, each division representing different types of clubs on campus: academic, athletic, cultural, performing arts, special interest and social service. Each division has a division chair and three division representatives who are elected by clubs at the club information meetings.

"Anyone who is an active member of a club on campus can run for a division representative position on the CCC," Thompson said. "Its main purpose in student government is to make sure

that clubs are represented to the rest of the Student Union."

Thompson said this year, along with the usual business of hearing appeals for additional funding, the CCC has been working on their guidelines, bylaws and operating procedures.

"We wanted to make this a particular focus of our work in the fall, that way we could make sure that our treatment of all clubs is as equitable as possible," Thompson said. "Right now we are preparing for Winter Reallocation in January and are working on more ways to make the CCC more transparent than it has been in the past."

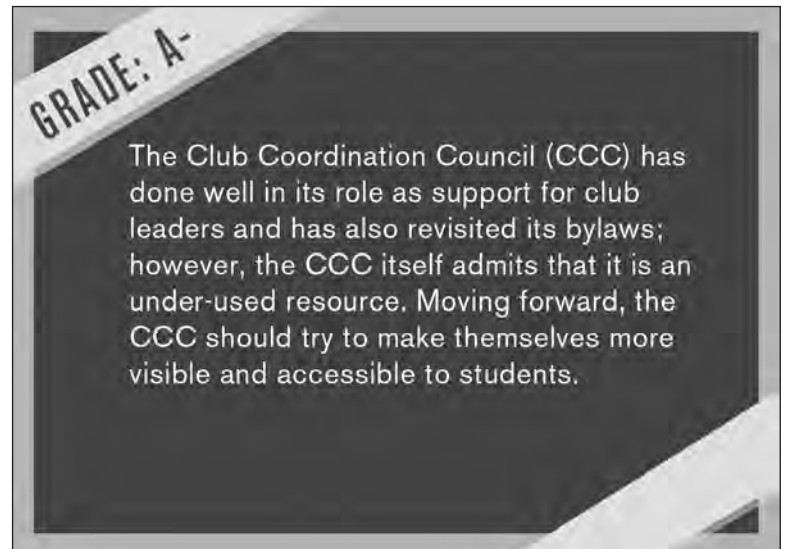
Thompson said one of the

overall goals of the Council has been to make their organization as transparent as possible.

"We are looking at multiple ways of achieving this, such as restructuring the Spring Allocation process and providing more online resources," Thompson said.

The CCC is important because undergraduate clubs make up a large part of student life at the University, Thompson said.

"The idea of student government is to make the undergraduate experience as fulfilling and meaningful as it can be, while also disseminating information about the University administration," Thompson said. "We



want to act as a resource for clubs on campus by communicating both what it takes to administratively run a successful club as well as

what the University can do to help that effort."

Contact Matthew McKenna at mmcken12@nd.edu

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Appreciation Week

December 14-19

- Students receive 10% off all purchases
- Faculty/Staff Receive an additional 5% off all purchases
- Combine a tall handcrafted beverage with a pastry or sandwich at Starbucks on Eddy Street and get 15% off
- Mention "It's Appreciation Week!" when you're at Einstein's in the Bookstore and score a free drip coffee with any order



Notre Dame Clearance Center on Ironwood Rd.

Please recycle
The Observer.



STUDENT SENATE

Group examines, votes on internal issues

By MEGAN VALLEY
News Writer

Student body vice president Nidia Ruelas said student senate has done “very well” engaging in critical issues this year.

“We’ve fostered together a climate of dialogue where people are talking with each other instead of to each other and when they’re engaging these issues, even if they disagree, even if they’re difficult issues,” she said.

Senate’s biggest, most recent accomplishment was the passing of three resolutions regarding election reform in November, Ruelas said. The new regulations allow candidates more freedom when engaging with voters online and through social media

platforms.

“That came out of a lot of dialogue, a lot of work and a lot of work was done outside of Senate,” Ruelas said. “But within Senate, the talk that was shared was very good and helpful.”

Discussion and feedback on Onward, a forum for students to submit and vote on ideas, and the University’s Honor Code also had a “good input,” according to Ruelas.

“Some of the conversation regarding the academic integrity was also a huge success for Senate because they engaged the topic critically,” she said.

Ruelas said senators have also done an excellent job of communicating between student government and their dorms, especially regarding

the new sustainability initiatives in the dining halls. Senators are also “very active” in their departments.

“For example, if they’re active through University Affairs, maybe they’re involved in things like the Huddle price scanner,” she said.

With the recently released recommendations of the Core Curriculum Review Committee, Ruelas said discussing the recommended changes will be a main focus for next semester.

“I think the intention is that this conversation goes out during the whole semester,” she said.

Ruelas said academic integrity will be another focus as the “actual policies and recommendations are being thought

up” from the University Code of Honor Committee.

Diversity and inclusion will be another focus for senators to consider next semester, she said.

“The other one that we want to stress is diversity and inclusion in many ways, not just racial or ethnic, but also socioeconomic. To some extent I think we’ve addressed those issues, but they’ll probably be the focus for next semester.”

Ruelas says she hopes to incorporate other groups when working on issues of diversity and inclusion.

“At the beginning of the year we had the diversity and inclusion training and another thing I think we can do is to foster a discussion related to the ‘It’s Time ND’ campaign

that Diversity Council has led forward, so I think that things like that, bringing in speakers to talk, and maybe it would even take the form of a resolution too,” she said.

Contact Megan Valley at
mvalley@nd.edu



HALL PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL

Council facilitates dorm programming

By MARGARET HYNDS
News Editor

Every spring, each of the University’s 29 undergraduate residence halls elects a president and vice president to preside over the dorm’s government and to represent the dorm on Hall President’s Council (HPC).

According to the council’s co-chair, senior Meredith Fraser, HPC meets every Tuesday evening and consists of the all dorm presidents and vice presidents as well as an executive board made up of two co-chairs, two social chairs, an athletic chair and a financial chair — each of whom formerly served as hall

vice presidents or presidents.

The group has an advisor from the Student Activities Office, Casey St. Aubin, but HPC “[operates] pretty independently, but [is] a branch of Student Government that deals primarily with residence halls,” Fraser said in an email.

She said the council exists to

help hall governments identify what their individual residents need, and also to address the concerns of the residential student community at large.

“Our main goal involves hall leaders helping to meet the needs of residents,” she said. “This is always something that we can improve upon, so our Board works alongside the residence hall leaders to maintain a consistent resident focus. ... This year we have been able to continue to build a relationship with rectors as well as other members of the Office of Housing that share with us a common purpose.”

Dillon Hall president junior Kevin Esherick added the council also serves as a network for different hall governments to collaborate and share ideas.

“In my opinion, HPC’s most important function is to serve as an enabler for student leaders,” he said. “It gives hall presidents access to resources, ideas and networks that are instrumental in producing programming for our halls and the rest of the campus community.”

Looking forward in the semester, Fraser said she and co-chair Seamus Quilty wanted to

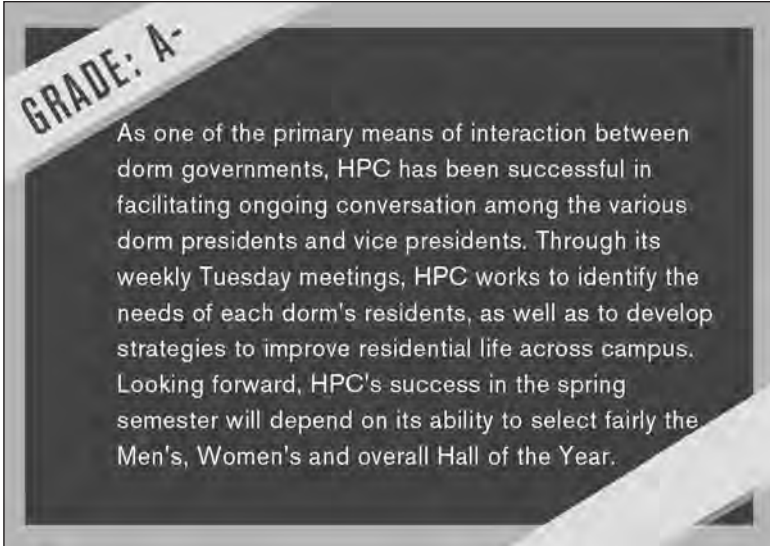
continue working with other groups and institutions on campus.

“... We have a few projects in progress,” she said. “We are hoping to continue to strengthen relationships with other campus organizations and hall communities, including rectors, hall staff teams and student government. We would like to increase awareness for our HPC mission, which involves every hall resident.”

One of the council’s most visible projects, however, is the annual awarding of Hall of the Year. Each spring, a committee consisting of HPC’s executive board, the judicial council president, and two student senators select the overall Hall of the Year, Men’s Hall of the Year and Women’s Hall of the Year. Fraser said HPC was looking into re-evaluating the Hall of the Year selection process.

“... We are working to determine if there is any possibility to enhance the hall community evaluation process that culminates in the Hall of the Year award,” she said.

Contact Margaret Hynds at
mhynds@nd.edu



PAID ADVERTISEMENT



Come join us at Lucky's Gingerbread Cottage for Study Break

Want a free massage? How about free coffee and
ice cream sundae bar from American Expresso?
Free photo booth? Free food?
Good cheer and merriment?

When: Sunday, December 13, Noon - 2:00 p.m.
Where: Carole Sandner Hall
(the ACE Building behind the Basilica)

**All students are invited! First fifty students will receive an
Alumni Association Be The Light Lantern! Study Break is
brought to you by the Notre Dame Alumni Association and
Notre Dame Clubs across the country.**

 **ALUMNI & FRIENDS**

SMC COMMITTEES

SMC committees adapt to meet student needs

By KATHRYN MARSHALL
Associate Saint Mary's Editor

Whether collaborating on projects, adding programming or combining to form new committees, Saint Mary's Student Government Association (SGA) committees have initiated substantial changes over the past semester.

Council of Committee Chairs (CCC)

The SGA Council of Committee Chairs (CCC), which consists of 20 students working in 12 committees dedicated to different aspects of the Saint Mary's community, has sought to collaborate more effectively in order to develop events focused on better serving student interests and concerns, CCC vice president of external affairs Emily James said.

James, a senior, said the CCC committees are dedicated to topics such as alumnae,

athletic, technology, market and media, mission, food, community, first year concerns, international, social concerns, sustainability and Sophia Program.

"Every girl in each position has a very unique passion for what her committee is doing," James said. "Each one really wants to put on events that make things better for the student body."

The CCC meets every week in order to keep the different committees and student body president and vice president updated on events and provide opportunities to collaborate in planning.

"It's a lot of work and a lot of time; oftentimes the student body doesn't realize how much work members put in," James said.

Safety Week, a new addition this past October, was a collaboration between community co-chairs Maiti Dages and Mimi Nary, sustainability

co-chairs Casey Moorhead and Chelsey Fattal and technology co-chairs Jenna Wilson and Sarah Kalal, James said.

(Editor's Note: Chelsey Fattal is a News Writer for The Observer.)

Food Week and Save a Belle, Love a Belle (SABLAB) Week were also successes this semester, she said.

"Most people, I've heard, aren't the biggest fans of Food Week because of changes in the dining hall, but food chair Bailey Oppman made it a positive week by bringing in food trucks, which was unlike anything we have ever had," James said. "Also, social concern co-chairs Mary Joy Dingler and Jenna Wozniak did an awesome job during SABLAB Week."

"Despite certain complaints that had happened on social media prior to the week, the co-chairs handled SABLAB week really well, and their events had really good turnouts."

Grade: B+

Newly-merged SGA Senate and Finance committee

In a change from previous years, the SGA senate and finance committees merged, committee vice president senior Shannon Golden said.

"Before, the finance committee was made up of different student organization leaders," she said. "This year, the finance committee is made up of our senators, which is made up of two students from each class and then a graduate student."

The senate and finance committee acts as the voting body of the student body and votes on the allocation of money to different student groups.

"With our tuition, there is a certain part that goes towards student funds that certain student organizations can request," Golden said. "All the requests come to me on OrgSync, and then I send the requests out to my committee."

Golden said allocation decisions are based on finance

by-laws found in the SGA constitution, which ensure the money goes only to the Saint Mary's community.

"The main goal the senate wanted to meet this year was to be as efficient as possible," she said. "Many organizations rely on the committee to get approval for funding and we want to make sure we can give the appropriate answer as soon as possible."

Next semester, the senate and finance committee plans to be transparent in telling students about the support SGA can provide for student organizations.

"There are a lot of students who don't realize there is money available for them," Golden said. "Student organizations can come to SGA for help, whether it's to get their event out through school wide emails or assistance through funding."

Grade: A-

Contact Kathryn Marshall at kmarsh02@saintmarys.edu

See more coverage online.
ndsmcobserver.com

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

'WHAT'S IN A NAME?'

When the name is First Folio, the answer is, "almost everything." Witness a rare piece of Shakespearean history this January at the Hesburgh Library as Notre Dame is privileged to be the first stop on this national tour.

SHAKESPEARE.ND.EDU

FIRST FOLIO!

the book that gave us
SHAKESPEARE
on tour from the
Folger SHAKESPEARE
LIBRARY

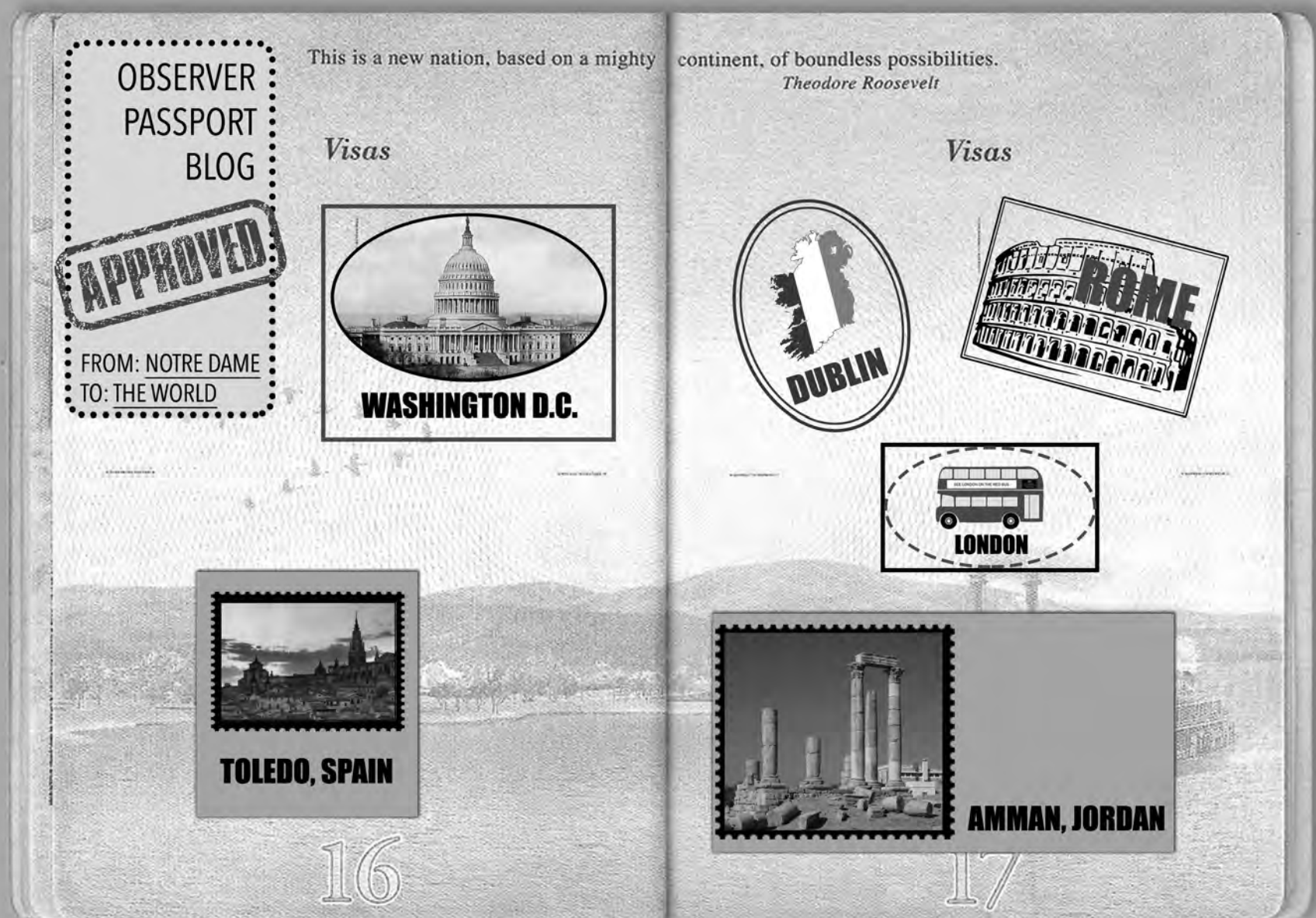
UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
Hesburgh Libraries



SHAKESPEARE
AT NOTRE DAME



TRAVEL WITH THE OBSERVER PASSPORT



READ ABOUT
THE EXPERIENCES OF OUR WRITERS
AROUND THE WORLD AT

abroad.ndsmcobserver.com

THE **OBSERVER**

DEPARTMENT REVIEWS

ATHLETICS REPRESENTATIVE

Senior Athletics representative Samuel Gerstemeier has been working with Compton Family Ice Arena to streamline the process of organizing student skates for class councils with the goal of increasing student attendance at events. Along with the department of Residence Life, Gerstemeier has been looking into how RecSports can help students understand the variety of fitness and recreational options available on campus. He said he would like to help to make sure student interests are well represented and also plans on evaluating the student ticket exchange policy for football.

B

DEPARTMENT of GENDER ISSUES

The Department of Gender Issues has continued the “It’s On Us” campaign to bring an end to sexual assault on Notre Dame’s campus. Apart from posters and notecards, another main focus of the campaign has been the itsonus.nd.edu pledge. Since September, the pledge has been signed by more than 325 students, with a goal of 400 by the end of December. In addition to “It’s On Us,” the department has co-sponsored two events with the GRC: “Are You Getting the Signal?” and the Time to Heal Dinner, which was aimed to allow the community to reflect on and heal from the effects sexual violence on campus.

B+

DEPARTMENT of CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY

Department director Michael McCroskey has been involved in a number of technology-related focus groups, including ones on Sakai and InsideND, to represent student views. The department has also worked with OIT to resolve unresponsive printers and to lengthen the print queue. They have collaborated with the Registrar to test and implement a new class registration system, NOVO Registration. Their biggest undertaking has been the implementation of the Onward online student forum and are current working on an updated student government website.

A

CAMPUS MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVE

Campus Ministry representative Ethan Muehlstein has been involved in the implementation of the “It’s On Us” campaign. He has helped plan and preside over two prayer services for reported sexual assaults at the Grotto. Muehlstein planned an interfaith prayer service on Pope Francis’s encyclical, drawing together students from different religious traditions in an event that included a group discussion on the environment and sustainable practices.

B+

DEPARTMENT of COMMUNITY RELATIONS

This department has been involved in a number of projects, including Quad Markets, which showcased local vendors from the South Bend. The department planned to pursue the reevaluation of communication among South Bend Police Department, NDSP and the student body to encourage more timely and accurate communication of off-campus incidents to the student body. However, after discussions with NDSP and evaluation of the crime reports software that the University employs, the department determined there are substantial barriers to immediate reporting of all violent crimes in the vicinity of campus. They plan to continue to advocate for timely reporting of violent off-campus crimes perpetrated against students.

B-

DIVERSITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Diversity Council representative Ray’Von Jones maintains lines of communication between Student Government and Diversity Council. At the start of this semester, Jones facilitated a session with Notre Dame’s student senators about the importance of embracing diversity within the Notre Dame community. Diversity Council has worked to raise awareness and foster dialogue on campus with events including the “It’s Time ND” campaign, which launched in early November and aims to promote diversity. The launch week featured a whiteboard campaign, in which more than 100 students and faculty participated. However, the controversial departure of secretary Lauren Hill has raised questions about dysfunction within the council’s leadership.

A-

DEPARTMENT of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

The department has spent its current term surveying the campus academic climate in addition to its other initiatives. It has expanded the Coffee Hours program, which has grown by over 300 percent since the spring, and hopes to expand the program to all campus cafés by next semester. Department director Bridget Rickard created the Committee on Undergraduate Academic Affairs, which gathers an academic commissioner from all residence halls, a representative from Diversity Council and members of the department to provide, review and promote discussion on the general academic policies and regulations of the University.

A-

FIRST UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE IN LEADERSHIP

FUEL introduces first-year students to student government and allows them to begin working with upperclassmen on departments. The program saw its most selective application process ever this year, with 97 applications and 31 members selected. The number of applications submitted increased from last year by 17.5 percent. This semester, FUEL conducted a focus group on the changes to freshmen orientation, known as Welcome Weekend. Following the focus group, FUEL crafted a recommendation that is in the process of being submitted to the director for Student Engagement and the Welcome Weekend Committee. Moreover, in coordination with Maureen Dawson, assistant dean in First Year of Studies, FUEL conducted a focus group on the Moreau First Year Experience.

A-

DEPARTMENT of COMMUNICATIONS

This department is responsible for advertising events, initiatives and projects from any department in Student Government to the student body and communicating Student Government’s mission or ideals into action on campus. The department works on a number of special projects that may not fit under the umbrella of other departments. They have developed logos, slogans and posters for other departments. The department created taxi cards that have received a positive response from the administration and from students. They also organized the Refugee Dinner in collaboration with the departments of Community Relations and National Engagement and Outreach.

A

DEPARTMENT of NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

This semester, the department set out to collaborate further on national events with campus political groups. In October, it co-hosted a GOP debate watch with BridgeND, College Republicans and College Democrats with more than 100 people in attendance. The department partnered with NDVotes to administer a survey of students’ political awareness that received about 100 responses. The department plans to examine these results and use them to motivate discussions and events in the future. Looking forward, they plan to bring a New York Times reporter to campus to speak about the refugee crisis in Europe or potentially about reporting in a war zone.

B+

DEPARTMENT of RESIDENCE LIFE

This semester, the department introduced Dorm Week, a collaboration with HPC to encourage friendship between the various dorm communities. The director of the department was a member of the Orientation Steering Committee that created and facilitated the new experience of Welcome Weekend. She used department suggestions and feedback to shape the outcome. Research on other peer intuitions has already been completed; that research, combined with results from a student survey, will be used to make recommendations to Student Affairs. The spring 2016 semester will feature a free Saturday fitness series co-sponsored by RecSports. While future initiatives look promising, Dorm Week was poorly executed and failed to engage a large number of students.

B

DEPARTMENT of UNIVERSITY AFFAIRS

University Affairs was involved in the creation and distribution of taxi cards earlier this semester, as well as enhanced price visibility in the Huddle Mart, which Food Services has agreed to do. The Department is collaborating with OIT to update information regarding hours of operation for food venues on campus, especially over breaks. The department hopes to place a Chase ATM in the southern area of campus near Reckers, as well as place an automated external defibrillator (AED) in every dorm on campus. The department has good goals for the future, but so far, the implementation of these ideas has been lacking.

B

DEPARTMENT of INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The three main focuses of Internal Affairs this year are the role of Senator-Directors, election reform and awards. The first focus, Senator-Directors, was tackled several weeks ago and ended in the passing of the Department’s resolution that repealed subsection (d)(4) of Section 3.2 of the student union constitution, thereby disallowing Senators to double as Department Directors in future cabinets. The second focus, election reform, is currently underway with the completion and presentation of five resolutions regarding social media, endorsements and supporters in campaigns. Finally, discussion of the third topic, awards, has resulted in the formulation of three resolutions that are awaiting presentation in Senate.

A-