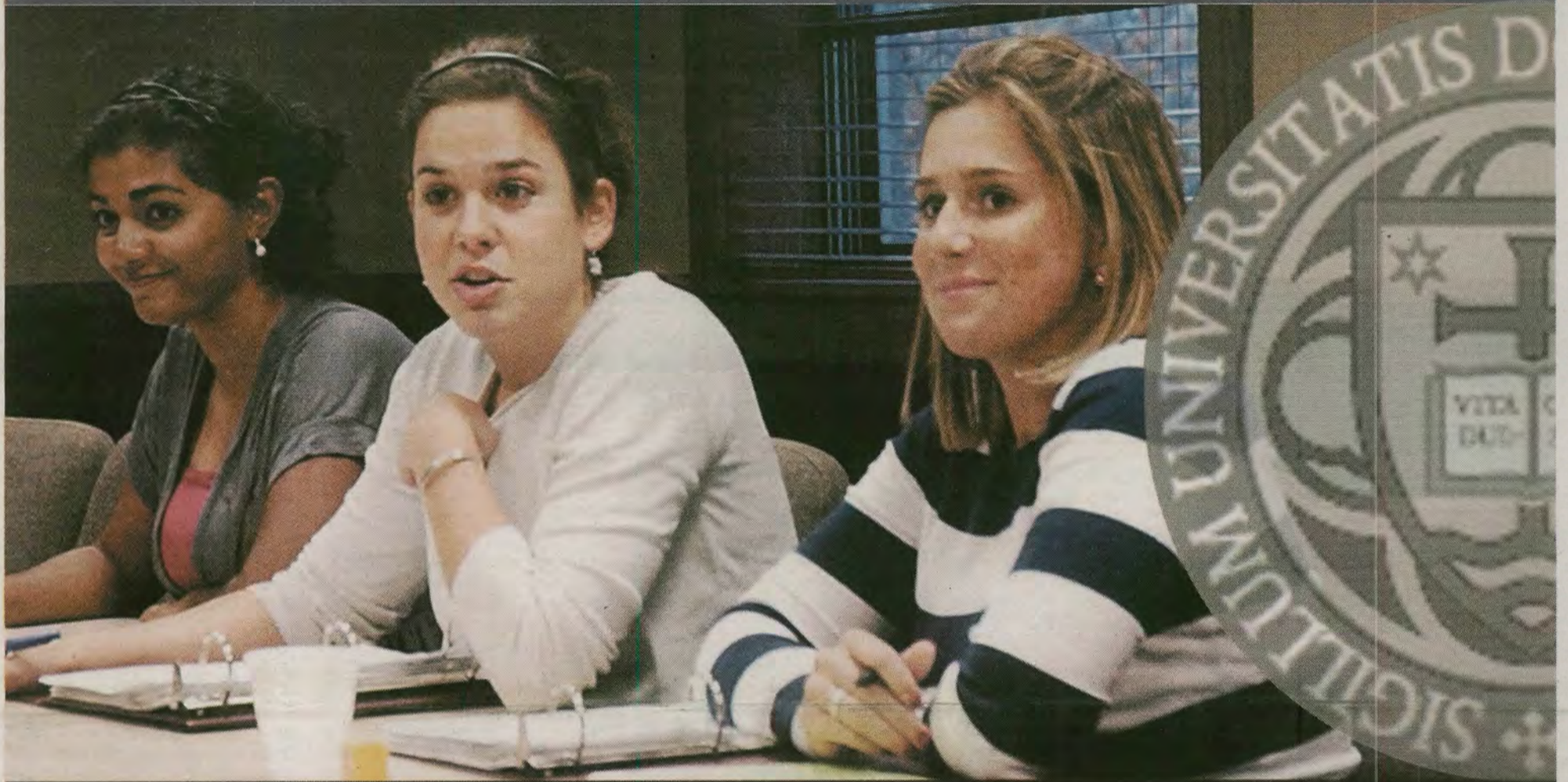


# THE OBSERVER

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2007

★★★★ in focus ★★★★★

## STUDENT GOVERNMENT



## NOTRE DAME AND SAINT MARY'S STUDENT GOVERNMENT 2007-2008



# Index

**Notre Dame**  
**Page 3**

The Office of the Student Body President

**Page 4**

Student Senate, Faculty Senate

**Page 5**

Council of Representatives, Student Union Board

**Page 6**

Campus Life Council, Graduate Student Union, Financial Management Board, Club Coordination Council, Hall Presidents Council, Class Councils

**Saint Mary's**

**Page 7**

Student Body President and Vice President, Board of Governance

**Page 8**

Student Activities Board, Residence Hall Association, Student Diversity Board, Student Academic Council, Class Boards

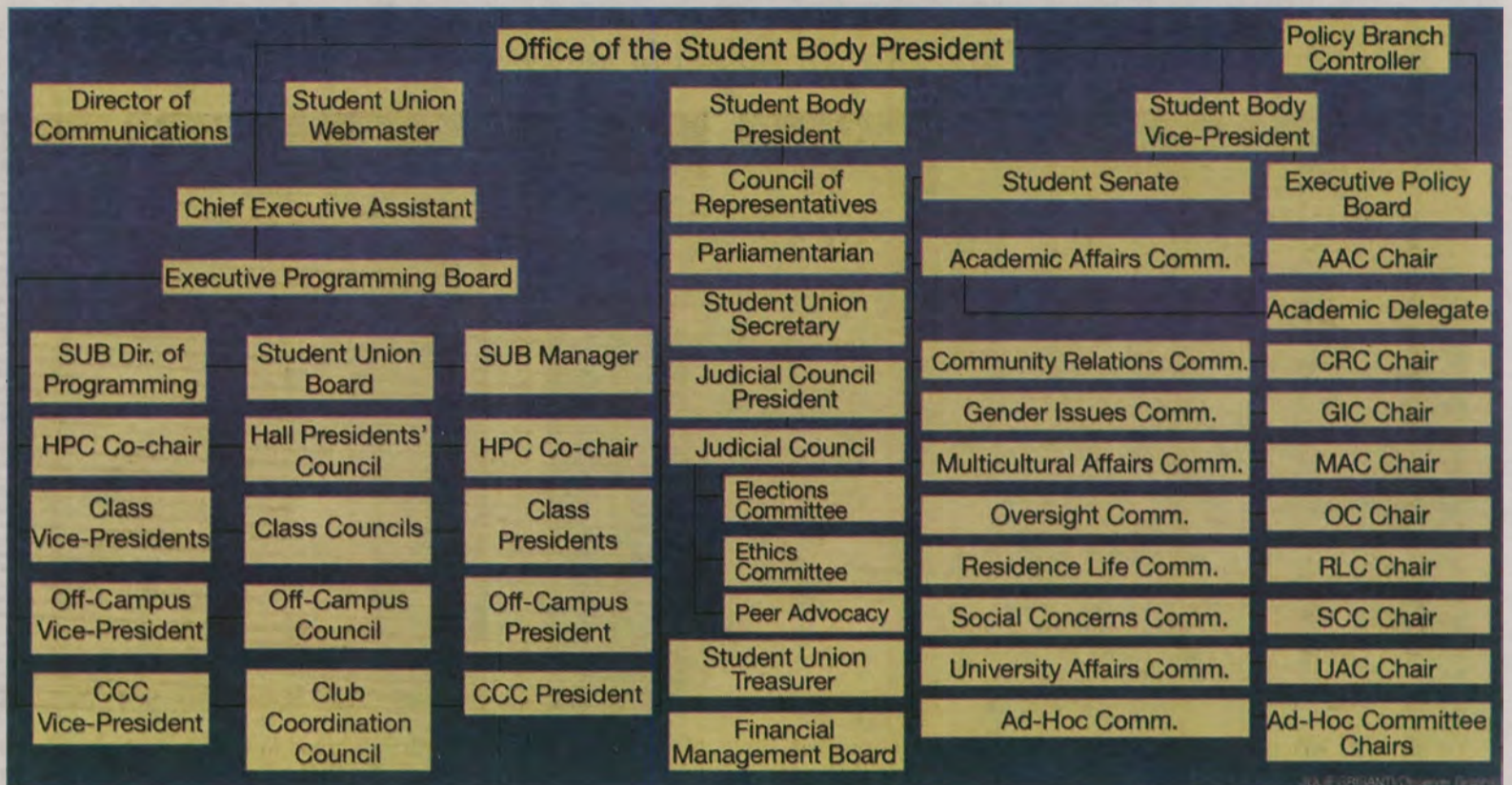
JULIE GRISANTI/Observer Graphic

**In Focus Staff**

Karen Langley  
Kaitlynn Riely  
Marcela Berrios  
Julie Grisanti

# Women fill upper tiers of government

Student body president, vice president, chief executive assistant and six of nine Senate chairs are female



By KAITLYNN RIELY  
In Focus Writer

The election last spring of Liz Brown and Maris Braun marked the first time the Notre Dame student government presidency and vice presidency have both been filled by women. The University community and especially female alumnae celebrated the historic election, a moment they suggested showed how far the University has come since becoming coeducational in 1972.

Braun said she was aware there was "a lot of hoopla or hype" when they were elected.

"Liz and I stressed from the beginning that we hoped our gender was the least interesting thing about us," she said.

They said they wanted their peers and the administrators and faculty at Notre Dame to focus on their capabilities as leaders rather than their gender. Brown said they were initially greeted with comments about the historic note. Since taking office, however, she and Braun have felt their performance has been judged based on their leadership, without consideration to their gender.

Most of the attention to their

gender continues to come from the University's female alumnae, Brown and Braun said. The fact that two women are the representatives of the student body means less for current students than it does for women who were at Notre Dame shortly after it became co-educational, Brown said. For them, the fact that two women are at the helm is a huge accomplishment.

"The Notre Dame they experienced was that women weren't the majority, and having a female president and vice president was unheard of, so that feedback is still overwhelmingly positive," Braun said. "It's still wonderful."

Since Brown and Braun assumed office last April, they have selected many women to the top-tier positions of student government. Sheena Plamoottil became their chief executive assistant, the No. 3 position under Brown and Braun. Michelle Zaldana and Kadeja Gaines serve as secretary and treasurer, respectively.

Carol Hendrickson, Brenna Doyle, Ninny Wan, Mariana Montes, Karen Koski and Callie Pogge lead six of the eight committees in the Student Senate. (Doyle co-chairs the Gender Relations

committee with Patrick Tighe.)

Brown said she was "pretty wary" when she realized how many of the top leaders in student government were female.

"I have five brothers," she said, "so I grew up in a male-dominated environment."

Sophomore Ian Secviar, one of only three men who serve as chairs of Student Senate committees this year, has never been at Notre Dame under a male student body president. Last year, Lizzi Shappell served as president with vice president Bill Andrichik. Dave Baron was president the year before Secviar became a student at Notre Dame.

"When I first sat down in the room with everyone, I was like, 'Wow, we're the only three guys here,'" Secviar said, referring to Patrick Tighe and Colin Feehan, the two other male Senate committee chairs.

"I find it very refreshing," he said.

But Secviar said he didn't think gender made much of a difference, instead pointing out the strong leadership skills of the female executives.

"It's nice to see that people are putting it in the back of their minds when they are voting —

they are not seeing a split gender ticket or a two female ticket," he said. "They are seeing what this candidate can do for the student body, and I think that's the right direction."

Senior Carol Hendrickson is the Senate Academic Affairs committee chair, and has served on student government in some capacity since she was a freshman. She said she thought it was simply chance that most of the top-tier positions were filled by women this year.

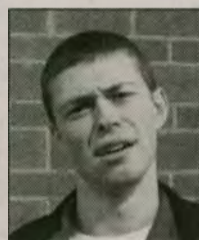
"I think it's great that we've overcome that barrier of not having two women or three women as the executives," she said. "But I really think it's important to have a balance."

Brown said when she and Braun were selecting Senate chairs and their chief executive assistant, they were not looking for a certain male to female ratio or to fill quotas, but were seeking the most qualified people.

"I think hopefully we are in an era now, where gender is not a top issue anymore, and it's really who's the most competent and the most qualified," she said.

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**QUESTION OF THE DAY: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT?**



**Adam Gadzinski**  
senior  
Morrissey

"Student government? We have one?"



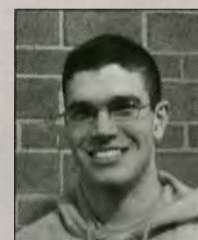
**Carly Torres**  
sophomore  
Farley

"I haven't heard anything about them, but I'm sure they've done a wonderful job."



**Deanne Munoz**  
freshman  
Welsh Family

"I think student government is clutch."



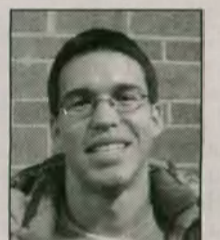
**Patrick Brown**  
senior  
Morrissey

"I'm always impressed with [former] senator [Greg] Dworjan's great ideas."



**Patrick Connors**  
junior  
O'Neill

"Who's our president?"



**Zach Elterz**  
senior  
Morrissey

"Vote Democrat."

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

## OFFICE OF THE STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

## Leaders respond promptly to student issues

*Brown, Braun win broad confidence by smoothly handling unexpected problems, like party permit ordinance*



IAN GAVLICK/The Observer

Liz Brown, left, and Maris Braun oversee a meeting of the Student Senate on Sept. 12 in the LaFortune Student Center.



JESSICA LEE/The Observer

Maris Braun, left, and Liz Brown stand in the student government office on Sept. 4. The leaders were busy this semester negotiating with the South Bend Common Council about the party permit ordinance.

By KAITLYNN RIELY  
In Focus Writer

From the time they took office April 1, Liz Brown and Maris Braun have worked to fulfill the requirements of their positions by representing undergraduate student interests, responding to student opinions and maintaining regular communication with the student body.

Brown and Braun came into office under unusual circumstances. Neither they nor their opponents in the run-off election last year received the required 50 percent plus one of the vote needed to win, so the decision about who would lead the student body was made in a closed meeting of the Student Senate.

Brown and Braun emerged victorious, but without the strong backing of a majority of students.

They did not let this deter them. "Since it was such a close election, that's motivating to me," Brown said in April. "We have to step up on our game and prove that the right decision was made in the end."

#### The test

In August, Brown and Braun erased any doubt about whether they could handle their positions.

While most students were still immersed in summer jobs and internships, the pair took action on an issue of undeniable relevance to their constituents: an ordinance proposed before the South Bend Common Council that would require residents of boarding houses to notify the city before hosting an event at which more than 25 people would have access to alcohol.

The ordinance defined a boarding house as a building in a residentially zoned area in which more than two non-related people live. Its requirements would thus affect the many upperclassmen living off campus as well as any students who would spend time at their residences.

The student body president and vice president sent an e-mail to all students Aug. 4 to notify them of the proposed ordinance and state their intention to fight it.

Student response to the ordinance flared on Facebook and other online message boards. As students began their return to campus, the issue dominated campus discussions and the editorial pages of The Observer.

Brown and Braun could have let themselves be cast by the Common Council and local press as angry students defending their right to party without concern for neighbors.

Instead, the pair displayed professionalism and integrity in meetings with Council members, listening intently to all sides of the issue. Their goal was to remove the permit process from the ordinance and seek other ways to address concerns about disorderly parties.

Brown warned students that their behavior at off-campus parties would determine her bargaining power with the Common Council. Through Student Senate meetings and a letter to The Observer, she asked students to be respectful of their South Bend neighbors. In coming weeks, Council members cited an improvement in behavior. On Sept. 24, they passed a revised ordinance that did not enact a permit process, though it included language for possible future implementation.

The passage of the revised ordinance was a major success for Brown and Braun. The alacrity they showed during the ordinance debates has been characteristic of their approach to pressing issues. Braun recognized this when she and Brown spoke recently with The Observer.

"A lot of how I would rate Liz's and my success is how we've responded to unforeseen events," she said. "We've been able to think on our feet, and I think that's helped us out a lot, as things have arisen that were not planned for."

#### Moving on

It would have been easy for Brown and Braun to become complacent after the successful outcome of the ordinance exchange.

But Brown and Braun have not slowed in their attentiveness to student concerns. Through their own initiative and with collaboration from Student Senate committee chairs, they tackled the downsizing of the student ticket exchange program and the jump in the price of course packets. Student government made some progress on both, and Brown and Braun said they are confident changes to the exchange program and the course packet distribution and pricing system will be implemented. Brown said it appears the student ticket exchange program will be open to more games than

this year, when students were only allowed to exchange tickets for the Notre Dame-USC game.

Senate Academic Affairs committee chair Carol Hendrickson said course packets for Arts and Letters classes will not be sold from the bookstore next semester. Other course packets will still be sold from the bookstore, she said.

Hendrickson had been told that there will be changes next semester regarding course packets still sold through the bookstore, but she was not sure what those changes would be. Hendrickson also spoke with the Hesburgh Library about increasing use of e-reserves. The library has said it will be able to accommodate an increase in e-reserves in January.

Brown and Braun are attuned to the opinions and interests of the student body, as they demonstrated this fall, when they suggested that students wear green on a designated day in support of the flailing football team. Though the gesture did little to improve the team's fortunes, it showed that Brown and Braun consider various ways to engage their constituents in University issues.

Brown and Braun first demonstrated their ability to respond quickly and thoughtfully after a gunman killed 32 students at Virginia Tech last April. They led a discussion among senators about how the Notre Dame community could express its condolences after the massacre. Their compassionate approach to an issue that rocked not only Virginia Tech, but college campuses across the country, came two weeks after they had entered office.

#### Moving from dialogue to action

Though unexpected problems have taken up much of their time, Brown and Braun have still acted quickly to fulfill their campaign promises.

Shortly after she took office last year, Brown, who served as chief executive assistant in last year's Lizzi Shappell-Bill Andrichik administration, urged student government to move past dialogue toward action to make "concrete, positive changes to student life at Notre Dame."

Brown and Braun set the standard for action at the first Student Senate meeting of the 2007-08 school year, when they announced that two of their campaign goals had come to fruition. The concession stands at Notre Dame Stadium and at the Joyce Center

now take Domer Dollars, and students who live on campus have the opportunity to purchase up to five guest meals, for five dollars each, per semester.

Their chief executive assistant, Sheena Plamoottil, oversaw the launch of the new student government Web site, a much needed change for the organization.

Brown and Braun owe a great amount of credit to their Senate committee chairs for advancing the goals of the Brown-Braun administration, as well as for generating their own initiatives.

As Brown and Braun enter their final months in office, they must ensure their success with the ordinance is not the only defining moment of their administration. Brown said she and Braun don't expect their efforts to taper off in the spring — though, she said, those efforts may lack the dramatic tone of past achievements.

"I think we still have a lot of work to be done," Brown said. "I think my concerns are that we'll run out of time. I don't really see that happening, since we've put in a lot of work this semester. Maybe our successes won't be as blatant next semester as they were this semester, but we are still pursuing good initiatives. There's a lot left to do."

Brown and Braun said they will continue to address community relations concerns in the spring. They are working with the Campus Life Council to prepare a report on the future of community relations for Father Mark Poorman, vice president for student affairs. They are also working with the Student Affairs office on a good neighbor guide for students who move off campus.

Brown and Braun plan to follow up on this fall's Notre Dame

Forum on immigration through events led by the Senate Social Concerns and University Affairs committees.

Braun said she is excited about the emergence of student group GreeND and plans to support its objective to make Notre Dame a more environmentally friendly campus.

Senate committees are working on numerous other initiatives, many of which seem likely to come to fruition before the Brown-Braun administration ends in March.

Should any urgent issues emerge during their final months in office, Brown and Braun's record suggests they will address it with speed and confidence. If they can bring that same drive to mundane matters of governance, they will conclude a successful run as student body president and vice president.

#### Campaign promises in review

♦ **Delivered**  
Faculty-student debate series  
ND Forum follow-up  
Domer Dollars in the Stadium and the JACC  
Guest Meal Exchange program  
Sexual Assault Awareness Week  
Darfur social action campaign letter to the University

♦ **Pending**  
Taste of South Bend  
Community-based curriculum  
South Bend airport shuttle

♦ **Unsuccessful**  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day as University holiday  
Standardize academic advising

Contact Kaitlynn Riely at  
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## Grade: A

Brown and Braun have tackled the issues that have arisen this year with alacrity. The party permit ordinance was an obstacle they could not have predicted when they took office, but they took it in stride and won the confidence of the student body through their negotiations with the South Bend Common Council. Their challenge now is to maintain their momentum into the spring semester.

## STUDENT SENATE

## Senators begin engaging in productive dialogue

By KAITLYNN RIELY  
In Focus Writer

The 28 representatives who sit on the Student Senate have meshed well this year with the top three leaders and the nine committee chairs, allowing for productive dialogue and effective resolutions.

The ingredients that make a successful Student Senate are vocal senators who will speak their mind about issues, student body president Liz Brown said last week.

When the Brown-Braun administration began in April, the senators seemed hesitant to challenging ideas proposed by the top three executives or the committee chairs. Brown said wariness on the part of the senators is typical at the beginning of the term.

Last April, Brown made the first of three State of the Student Union addresses required by the Student Body Constitution. She told senators to move from dialogue to action. She and student body vice president Maris Braun set the tone for action at the first Senate meeting this year, when they announced that two of their campaign goals had already been met — the introduction of Domer Dollars in the Stadium and Joyce Center and the creation of a guest meal exchange program.

Frivolous discussion about meaningless or ill-prepared resolutions is indeed a waste of time. But Brown and the senators must remember that senators need to engage in productive dialogue if they are to stimulate new ideas and improve old ones.

At the first meeting of the Student Senate last April, Braun encouraged the senators and the committee chairs to actively engage in their administration.

"I encourage you to always voice your point of view, no matter what. The point of Senate is to create conversation and debate," Braun said in April. "Senate has the capability to get a lot done, and Liz and I would really like to see that happen this year."

Senators have moved from their initial hesitance to ask questions and argue opinions to greater engagement in dialogue and debate, to the benefit of the entire Senate.

When Academic Affairs chair Carol Hendrickson first presented

a resolution that urged faculty members to increase use of electronic reserves, in place of more expensive course packets, many senators opposed the resolution, mostly because of language that stated a switch would be environmentally friendly. Many students would still print out the pages from the electronic reserves, they argued.

Hendrickson was able to collect enough feedback from senators to draft a revision of the resolution that omitted reference to the environment. The resolution's passage showed how legislative input improved the resolution's effectiveness.

Purposeful dialogue again produced tangible results when Siegfried senator Jim Lockwood proposed his amendment to dictate presidential responsibilities.

Lockwood presented an amendment outlining the way in which the student body president should interact with the Community/Campus Advisory Coalition, or CCAC. The CCAC is a group created by the South Bend Common Council composed of representatives from the city and community, as well as from the administration and student bodies of local colleges. It was created by the South Bend Common Council in late September as part of the resolution to the debates about requiring student renters to register large parties with the city.

The CCAC is intended to foster dialogue about problems between colleges and the wider community. Notre Dame's student body president was invited to attend meetings of the CCAC.

Lockwood's original resolution was well intentioned and filled a void in the Student Body Constitution, but it contained stringent language that dictated exactly how the student body president should interact with the CCAC and what he or she should report back to the Student Senate.

Many senators and chairs spoke against the specificity of the amendment, blocking its passage. Senate Oversight chair Ian Secviar reworked the amendment in his committee and presented it to the Senate a second time. The senators' dialogue allowed effective revisions and resulted in an amendment less restrictive of the student body president's actions. The resolution passed.

Since August, several senators

have strengthened their participation in Senate meetings. Some, like Fisher Hall's Stephen Bant and Lyons Hall's Kelly Kanavy, have presented resolutions on course packets and on University divestment from Darfur to the Senate on behalf of the committee chairs.

If the Student Senate is to be effective, senators must take deep personal interest. Senators must provide a check on executive members and committee chairs by questioning them about the accuracy and meaning of resolutions.

They should also bring to the Senate's attention any issues students are discussing in their dorms, as some senators have started to do in the last few meetings. If they continue this next semester, they can help student government better address the concerns of its constituents.

The committee chairs have done well taking up Brown's call for action. They have created passable resolutions and organized student events. Secviar and Hendrickson have been outstanding as chairs of the Oversight and Academic Affairs committees. Secviar's release of the revised Student Body Constitution has finally rid the document of its previous errors and discrepancies.

Hendrickson took great initiative in addressing the spike in course packet prices this year. Her dogged determination to prevent price gouging of course packets came across in the PowerPoint presentations and the statistical assessments she made to the Senate.

The chairs must display thorough knowledge about the intent of and research behind their resolutions. A number of resolutions passed this semester, including a Multicultural Affairs letter to University President Father John Jenkins encouraging increased recruitment and retention of minority faculty and a Residence Life committee resolution to the Office of Residence Life recommending improved workout facilities, had preventable holes in logic or research. To maximize impact, chairs must solidify resolutions before presenting them to the Student Senate.

If the Senate continues to have productive discussion and produce meaningful resolutions, it can accomplish a great deal this year.

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## Grade: A-

Productive dialogue among senators and chairs has led to an efficient semester. Senators should continue bringing their dorms' perspectives to Senate business. Committee chairs have taken Liz Brown's charge of action seriously. They should focus on bringing forth more resolutions — but only after solid research and preparation.

## Multicultural Affairs: C+

The committee has yet to make real progress. The Senate approved a letter to University President Father John Jenkins encouraging him to prioritize minority faculty recruitment and retention. The letter had good intentions, but chair Ninny Wan provided no research showing why or how Jenkins could achieve this. The committee's Native American exhibit was a good idea, but Wan's goal to cancel classes on Martin Luther King Jr. Day has not gone smoothly. Look for the committee to institute a day of service instead.

## Community Relations: A-

The committee was overshadowed this year by the efforts of Liz Brown and Maris Braun. Chair Colin Feehan quietly led the committee in other projects while Brown and Braun addressed the South Bend Common Council's party permit ordinance. His group's accomplishments include a voter registration drive, a community block party and an off-campus legal aid clinic. Next semester, look for the Taste of South Bend, a food-tasting event. Feehan's plan to create a community-based curriculum with the Center for Social Concerns will be a challenge to accomplish by April.

## Gender Issues: B

Typically, this committee has its greatest accomplishments in the spring semester. Chairs Patrick Tighe and Brenna Doyle, an Observer ad executive, changed the name of last year's Eating Disorders Conference to the Health and Body Image Conference to appeal to all genders. The event is scheduled for March. The committee quietly staged a sexual assault awareness week this fall to correspond with Loyal Daughters and Sons.

## University Affairs: A

Unlike many student government-sponsored events, the committee's student-faculty debate series has attracted student interest. Senate passed a resolution sponsored by Callie Pogge's committee to urge the University to pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2015. Pogge has gone green. She organized a successful Energy Week and said she plans to launch an environmental campaign next semester. Her biggest battle may be finding an on-campus location for cabs to pick up students.

## Academic Affairs: A

Carol Hendrickson's leadership has been impressive. She addressed student concerns about a hike in course packet prices by speaking to administrators. She told senators it appeared that course packet costs will be down next year. Her committee also passed resolutions recommending faculty increases their use of e-reserves and asked the Office of Information Technologies to create an online deposit system for print quotas.

## Social Concerns: B

Chair Karen Koski has done a good job coming up with new initiatives for the Social Concerns committee to tackle, including a resolution commending the University for divesting from companies that support the Sudanese government while human rights violations continue in the country's Darfur region. Koski needs to improve presentations to win the attention and enthusiasm of other senators.

## Residence Life: C

Residence Life must refocus its agenda on achievable goals backed by research. The University is unlikely to make laundry free in dorms. Chair Mariana Montes succeeded in recommending that more emergency call stations be added on campus, but a recommendation to improve exercise facilities in the residence halls, though well-intentioned, lacked solid research.

## Oversight: A-

Chair Ian Secviar has shown impressive knowledge of the Student Body Constitution. His committee's release of a revised Constitution may prevent misunderstanding that arose last year from errors in the document. However, Secviar must be careful not to over-revise the Constitution. At a recent meeting, he proposed a resolution that would redefine the vote to abstain. The Senate must not stifle progress with quibbles.

## FACULTY SENATE

## Members discuss Catholic recruitment, Academic Articles

By MARCELA BERRIOS  
In Focus Writer

This year, the Faculty Senate has acted as a true liaison between professors and administrators. It has engaged prominent issues, such as revising the Academic Articles and considering University efforts to recruit more Catholic professors, that will affect both faculty and the University for years to come.

The senators began the year proposing amendments to the University's Academic Articles, which are "like a loose contract between the faculty and the administration," said Senate Chair Colin Jessop, a physics professor.

The Articles outline the University's standards for the

appointment and promotion of faculty and other issues of relevance to faculty members, Jessop said. Every 10 years the Academic Council reviews and considers amending the Articles. When the Academic Council requested recommendations from the Faculty Senate, the senators started talking to their constituencies about it.

The Senate proposed seven revisions to the Council, which will deliberate in January. One of the Senate's proposals concerned the notice period the University must give before dismissing a faculty member.

The senators have also reacted to University plans to increase recruitment of Catholic faculty.

At the semester's final Faculty Senate meeting Nov. 7, faculty

members were presented with an Office of the Provost report detailing the conclusions of an ad hoc committee of professors

and administrators gathered to address the decreasing percentage of Catholic faculty at Notre Dame and consider University reaction.

"The University must of course appoint leaders who believe in the necessity and value of Catholic hiring, both as deans and chairpersons," the report said. "... [But] it is imperative that the University

maintain an environment where faculty of other faiths and none are included as full members of the community."

*"This is a very constructive and collaborative discussion between the faculty and the administration."*

Colin Jessop  
Senate chair

tions to University Provost Thomas Burish Dec. 12.

Before spring break, the Senate hopes to finalize a report on its official recommendations to the Provost about

recruiting Catholic faculty, Jessop said.

"This is a very constructive and collaborative discussion between the faculty and the administration," Jessop said. "It's not like 'us' versus 'them.' It's a dialogue, and a very open one."

Besides collecting feedback from professors about the Academic Articles and the report on the hiring of Catholic faculty, the Senate has also discussed ways to improve the efficiency of Teacher-Course Evaluations (TCEs). Jessop said the senators are looking into online TCEs that could be tailored easily to better evaluate different disciplines and courses.

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## COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES

## Members weigh in on ticket exchanges, voter turnout

Brown's advisory board discusses endorsing pro-immigrant U.S. Senate bill, apathy in student government elections

By JOHN TIERNEY  
In Focus Writer

Members of the Council of Representatives (COR), an advisory board to student body president Liz Brown, have thought outside-the-box in football ticket discussions and have shown a willingness to stand up against ideas put forth by Brown and vice president Maris Braun.

The Council has advised Brown throughout the semester, pushing for the creation of a new ticket-exchange system for home football games. Members unanimously suggested student-run lottery systems, similar to the USC lottery earlier this year, as a potential solution. They have been, however, more hesitant to agree on how to distribute the exchanged tickets in a way that would prevent, or at least limit, the students' ability to scalp their tickets.

The excessive scalping of unused football tickets was precisely the cause for the discontinuation of the Ticket Office's ticket exchange program earlier this year. A single exception was made for the USC game, as many students would be leaving campus for fall break.

Some Council members suggested printing the name of the person to whom the ticket is sold on the ticket itself and placing age limits on ticket buyers as ways to prevent scalping.

COR members kept the relationship between the student body and the ticket office in perspective, as most of them acknowledged that the Notre Dame ticket office does a lot more for students than ticket offices at other major universities.

Another football-related item that made its way to the COR agenda this semester is The Shirt.

The Shirt Solidarity Day, orig-

inally scheduled for Sept. 20, became the center of a small controversy after Brown and Braun sent an e-mail to the student body encouraging students to wear the green T-shirt in support of the football team.

After many people told them their request conflicted with a previously scheduled national solidarity day with the "Jena 6," Brown and Braun sent out a second e-mail encouraging students to wear black instead in support of six Louisiana African-American teenagers in the middle of a racially charged trial.

Brown and Braun said they were aware of the trial but not that Sept. 20 was designated as a Jena 6 solidarity day.

"It was not the intention of Student Government to plan a day in support of ND Football on the same day as a national movement to support the Jena 6," the second e-mail said.

While the oversight was corrected, and The Shirt Solidarity Day was rescheduled for the following day, the error made Brown, her advisors and Brad LeNoir — president of The Shirt Project — seem out-of-touch and unaware of current events.

The Council again talked about The Shirt in November when it had to approve Jason Gott as the new president of the project and discuss the potential national expansion of the The Shirt.

During its most recent meeting, COR members discussed a campaign to increase voter turnout at the next student body president elections on Feb. 10. The Council cited a lack of awareness of voting procedures as a possible cause for low voter turnouts in previous years but failed to consider the possibility that the minimal student partic-

ipation in the elections may be attributed to the students' lack of faith in the elected officials' efficiency in improving student life.

The Council's continued oversight of this growing sentiment will only further the perception that student government is not only useless but also out-of-touch with the student body.

Some members, however, did combat the latter perspective by asserting that student government should consult with students before officially supporting the DREAM Act on behalf of the student body. The DREAM Act is a U.S. Senate bill that would grant the qualifying children of illegal immigrants temporary legal status to allow them to attend college or serve in the military.

While many members argued that national political issues are not the domain of student government, Brown and Braun insisted it is the duty of student government to support projects that stand for what is right, even if they are not directly related to the University and without regard to the opinion of the student body.

Some members pointed to clubs on campus that could support the DREAM Act and said those organizations exist at Notre Dame as a resource for students who wish to support those specific causes.

But Brown and Braun remained steadfast in their belief that supporting the DREAM Act is the right thing to do. They cited the example of University President Emeritus Father Theodore Hesburgh and his support of the civil rights movement as precedent at Notre Dame for taking action in a similar context.

In other meetings, COR members also approved parliamentarian Tyler "T.J." Smith Oct. 2 and held closed-door budget discussions on Oct. 17 and Dec. 4. Besides its role as Brown's sounding board, COR is also responsible for approving student government appointments and any changes to the Student Union budget.

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## Grade: A

The Council of Representatives is an advisory body, not a legislative body; therefore, it did not produce many tangible results this semester. However, many council members showed a willingness to think creatively in working with the ticket office and to stand up to their administration in its attempt to support the DREAM Act. COR members took advantage of their platform to get their opinions heard by Brown and Braun.



VANESSA GEMPIS and DUSTIN MENNELLA/The Observer

Top, members of the Council of Representatives raise their hands to vote at a meeting on Oct. 2. Bottom, chief executive assistant Sheena Plamoottil, left, student body president Liz Brown, center, and vice president Maris Braun preside over a Nov. 13 meeting.

## STUDENT UNION BOARD

## Home games, scheduling issues thwart lectures, concert plans

By MARCELA BERRIOS  
In Focus Writer

Scheduling conflicts kept the Student Union Board (SUB) from bringing big-name musicians and speakers to campus this fall, SUB manager Phil Ross said.

SUB is charged with providing the student body with social and cultural programming. Ross, a senior, said the group is having a slow year with few guest speakers, few small-to-medium-sized shows and no large concerts.

Old staples like SUB movies and AcoustiCafe seemed to be the only SUB events happening this semester.

Ross said the lack of events was beyond SUB's control. An intense home game schedule is to blame.

With only six non-football weekends to work with before December, Ross said SUB was unable to book a major musical act to perform on any of the open nights.

Last year, SUB brought singer Ben Folds to campus for a sold-out concert at Stepan in November.

This year, football schedule constraints forced the group to focus on smaller events in smaller venues, like the Dec. 1 presentation of band The Format at Legends. Ross said about 750 people packed Legends above capacity during the concert.

Legends was also the site of another SUB hit this semester, a show by comedian Ben Bailey on Oct. 5.

Scheduling conflicts have persisted with other potential speak-

ers and artists SUB spoke to this fall.

"None of them came to fruition," Ross said. "Either their schedules wouldn't allow it or ours wouldn't."

Ross said he and his colleagues expect that to change in 2008. They're still in talks with some of the speakers that fell through this fall, Ross said, and they're looking into new ones as well.

With an election year around the corner, he said SUB has considered focusing on political speakers next semester. Earlier this semester, the group focused on bringing artistic speakers to campus for the Notre Dame Literary Festival, which featured a poet, a novelist, a journalist and a writer for "The Simpsons."

Throughout November, SUB and

the Creative Writing Program teamed up to host workshops, readings and question-and-answer sessions featuring the visiting writers. Ross said he saw the numbers of students at the events grow as the month progressed.

"The first couple of speakers had smaller crowds than the later ones," Ross said. "And that could've just been that the festival had gained momentum by then, but maybe we just needed to do a better job promoting the events early on. It's always tough getting students to notice and attend these things on weeknights so you really need to publicize them well. And that's something we'll be working on next semester."

Contact Marcela Berrios at  
aberrios@nd.edu

## Grade: B-

Home football games made weekends busy this semester, but SUB could have held other fun events, like last spring's SNL speaker series, in place of a major concert.

## CAMPUS LIFE COUNCIL

# Task forces yield few results

In brief meetings, members ponder green summits, Honor Code



Student body president Liz Brown, center, leads the Sept. 3 meeting of the Campus Life Council with chief executive assistant Sheena Plamoottil, left, and vice president Maris Braun.

By JENN METZ  
In Focus Writer

The Campus Life Council (CLC), composed of three task forces, laid out specific goals for the year, but as the semester comes to a close, the group has yet to pass a resolution.

Though task force leaders claim to be making progress in their individual meetings, so far the Council's biweekly meetings have lasted, on average, just 15 minutes, with the exception of an hour-long presentation by University Architect Doug Marsh. Results of the task force meetings have yet to be seen.

Chief executive assistant Sheena Plamoottil, who heads the Task Force on Campus Environment, has proposed a series of three green summits to raise awareness of environmental issues on campus.

Though the summits have the potential to be very successful, lack of publicity and coordination of schedules with rectors and other crucial attendees have rendered them somewhat ineffective.

One of the group's only successes so far this year has been Marsh's presentation explaining the Office of the University Architect's tenets for expansion.

The third green summit, currently scheduled to take place on Jan. 21, should be rescheduled to avoid conflict; hopefully Plamoottil will be able to focus on other task force goals, like the amount of food wasted in the dining hall and campus energy efficiency.

Student body vice president Maris Braun leads the Task Force on Student Development. Three of the group's outlined goals include the creation of an Honor Code awareness week, exploring

problems of student gambling and fostering better gender relations during Freshman Orientation activities.

The task force is capable of addressing some of these issues. However, after spending the majority of the semester presenting on the Honor Code initiative, Braun announced she would be passing it off to the University Code of Honor Committee because she believed its goals fell under the responsibilities of the Office of the Provost.

Braun and her task force need to start producing results. Resolutions on their initiatives could have potential, but so far, no progress has been seen.

If the Council hopes to make an impact on gender relations for next year's Freshman Orientation, the task force must start taking real action to pursue its goal.

The third CLC task force, the Task Force on Community Relations, works in contact with the Student Senate committee of the same name. Headed by Keenan senator Gus Gari, the task force has been pursuing the creation of a Notre Dame version of the Good Neighbor Guide, a University of Virginia pamphlet outlining relations between students and the greater community.

For the last several meetings, Gari has said the task force has been making progress on the pamphlet, but at the end of the semester, the contents have just been finalized and production has not started.

The Community Relations task force is also looking to improve transportation to and from campus. If tangible plans had been formed this semester, at least experimental changes could have been implemented to improve student transportation next semester. However, like the rest

**Grade: C**  
Though the members of the Council have outlined initiatives and goals, the result of their work has yet to be seen in the passing of a resolution.

of the Council, the task force has spent most of its time in talks.

Gari has done a commendable job conducting research on peer university policies regarding campus relations with the greater community, but the task force needs to step it up next semester.

CLC members offer a unique perspective on student life with its mix of students, rectors and staff. But the Council is at the same place it was last year at this time — no resolutions have been passed and matters have been deferred to other committees. The task forces need to stop talking and start doing.

Student body president Liz Brown needs to use the meetings more effectively and figure out what the CLC can accomplish in addition to its already-outlined objectives. Excluding the meeting with the architecture, the bi-weekly meetings have added up to about an hour and a half's worth of task force presentations, and the Council has failed to discuss any new business.

She recently called for task force leaders to make recommendations to the Office of Student Affairs, which could have some impact on student life.

Contact Jenn Metz at [jmetz@nd.edu](mailto:jmetz@nd.edu)

## Government in brief...

### Graduate Student Union examines teaching

The Graduate Student Union is an elected body aimed at representing graduate students' interests, promoting educational standards and facilitating interaction between graduate students and the University community.

This year, the GSU has focused on improving graduate life and career development. One such action was the funding of trips to professional conferences for graduate students. The GSU also hosted numerous social activities, including a charity gala and for-

mal dance.

The GSU conducted a survey of every graduate academic department to compile the best teaching styles and techniques.

The GSU, which represents only graduate students in Arts and Letters, Engineering and Science, has worked with other graduate organizations at Notre Dame.

The GSU maintains a presence in the Academic Council, the Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate.

- Davis Rhorer, Jr.

### Financial Management Board allocates funds

The Financial Management Board (FMB) is a student-operated oversight committee responsible for monetary distribution to various University organizations.

The board oversees The Shirt Project, approving all parts of the design and manufacturing phases and ensuring profitability.

The board also manages The Shirt Charity Fund, which is financed by half the revenue generated from The Shirt sales and is available to Notre Dame students to help pay for medical bills.

The board recently completed its

annual spending review through which it holds accountable all organizations receiving funds. Additional funds needed by organizations were allocated at this time.

In April, the board will review budgets for all major student organizations, including the CCC, for the 2008-09 school year.

Kadeja Gaines, the Student Union treasurer and head of the Financial Management Board, said clubs and organizations have been spending responsibly this year.

- Davis Rhorer, Jr.

### Club Coordination Council facilitates activities

Drawing from student activity fees and one third of the revenue from The Shirt, the Club Coordination Council (CCC) was able to allocate \$280,000 to about 225 clubs last year, according to CCC president Paul Robbins.

The CCC includes six different divisions: academic, athletic, cultural and special interest, social service and performing arts. The council allocates funds based on appeals and reports of clubs' progress from the past year and plans for the future.

Although there are already more than 200 clubs on campus,

Robbins said new clubs are created to fulfill still-unmet needs and interests. Last year, the Social Justice in American Medicine club was formed. New organizations receive probationary status for a year.

CCC's future goals include streamlining appeals for funds with online forms and databases and making clubs more aware of the CCC's services.

"It's a constant goal to try to keep the clubs informed that we're a resource for them," Robbins said.

- Claire Reising

### Hall Presidents' Council promotes pep rallies

Despite a 3-9 football season, Hall Presidents' Council co-chairs Lauren Sharkey and Andy Hellmuth said they were pleased with dorms' turnout at pep rallies and student involvement in dorm activities.

Sharkey said the success at pep rallies was partially due to enthusiasm from host dorms.

"We tried to keep the quads together, so there was rivalry [at the pep rallies]," Sharkey said.

In addition to hosting pep rallies, the HPC allows hall presidents to exchange dorm information, and the council allocates money to dorms' signature events.

Sharkey observed more involvement in a variety of dorm events this year, such as the Knott Rodeo and various speakers.

"What we look forward to is more and more dorms getting involved in activities that aren't usual," she said.

Hellmuth said in the future he hopes to see more multi-dorm events, such as Dillon and Alumni rivalry week. He said although brother-sister dorms foster inter-dorm activity, there is little collaboration among dorms of the same sex.

- Claire Reising

### CLASS OF 2008 COUNCIL

With nearly half its class living off campus, the Senior Class Council has organized events to draw students back.

The Council began the year with its traditional Margaritaville beach party. Other events included the Council's Millennium Development golf outing and a wine tasting at Legends. The group has also put together several cooking seminars, geared toward "helping students move from college into the real world," Council president Bridget Keating said.

Most of the Council's work focuses on Senior Week, the week between finals and graduation. "Because it's so large, it really requires our attention all year," Keating said.

- Joseph McMahon

### CLASS OF 2009 COUNCIL

The Junior Class Council has focused on organizing and publicizing class events.

According to Council president Bob Reish, the group is working on making its Web site more useful, so that students will only have to look at the site to see what events are going on.

"One of our main goals is increasing communication between the officers and the council to the entire class," Reish said. The new site also includes an online catalog selling Junior Class Council merchandise.

In addition, the Council gave on-campus students the chance to send care packages to their friends studying abroad by covering all shipping costs.

- Joseph McMahon

### CLASS OF 2010 COUNCIL

The Sophomore Class Council has organized a number of events to further involve its class in campus life.

The Council recently formed the Sophomore Spirit committee, whose goal, according to president Grant Schmidt, is to "represent the sophomore class and provide support for sophomore athletes." The committee is working on the sophomore class formal, a "prom-esque" dance to be held in South Dining Hall second semester.

The Council also held a formal dinner in the Stadium Press Box with Vice President of Student Affairs Father Mark Poorman that was attended by 120 students. All proceeds went to charities benefiting schools in Africa.

- Joseph McMahon

### CLASS OF 2011 COUNCIL

Though members of the Freshman Class Council are still getting used to campus, they have already organized well attended events.

The Council saw success with its Freshman Class Rosary at the Grotto, Council president Kate Clitheroe said. A large portion of the class attended the service.

In addition, the Council is currently working on organizing several dances as well as creating the freshman class T-shirt.

However, the Council is still working on establishing leadership roles and letting freshmen know about the events it is organizing. "We need to get ourselves organized so we can get our names out there," Clitheroe said.

- Joseph McMahon

## SAINT MARY'S STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

## Hodges, Payne emphasize communication

By KATIE KOHLER  
In Focus Writer

When Kim Hodges and Kelly Payne assumed their roles as student body president and vice president, they began the term with a focus on increased communication between students, administrators and alumnae.

In the fall semester alone, the duo has accomplished all of its campaign promises to some degree, Hodges said.

"In one sense or another, we already accomplished everything in our platform," she said. "We are lucky our boards are so innovative and creative. From the first years to the senior, they have given us so much to work with."

The pair ran on a campaign that included increasing diversity and continuing College traditions; improving communications between students, alumnae and administration; altering the format of Board of Governance meetings to make them more focused on specific issues each week; and increasing focus on programming and retention.

While campaigning, Hodges and Payne put strong emphasis on connecting students to student government, student government to administration, and students to administration. They have done so in different ways this year.

"Everything is about connecting important groups on campus," Payne said.

The first annual Career Insights Fair in November welcomed alumnae to campus, and various ad hoc committees on general education requirements and dining services worked with the administration.

Hodges and Payne built from past experience with the Student Diversity Board.

Hodges, the first black student body president in College history and former vice president of the Student Diversity Board, said she has worked throughout her presidency to address the issues most important to the overall student body while continuing to foster awareness of diversity issues.

"I knew taking this position as student body president that my spectrum can't be so narrow," she said. "I looked at the well-being of everyone on campus and broadened my spectrum."

Hodges focused on bringing to campus a greater variety of groups, people and events to increase student awareness of issues beyond Saint Mary's.

"I went in with a diversity of thought behind how I present my skills and leadership abilities on campus," she said. "We need to focus outside the Saint Mary's microcosm and more on the issues facing our community on a larger scale."

Last March, Hodges and Payne won the election by only 37 votes. They said the narrow margin of victory has not affected their attitudes for the term.

"When you run, you have to have high expectations anyway," Payne said. "One vote or 100 votes. We knew what we had to do this year."

Hodges also recognized the

importance of their executive support system.

"Now that we were able to touch on each of our campaign issues, we can dig even deeper next semester," she said.

The two recognized the development of leadership among their board members.

"They don't need our hand-holding and nurturing," Payne said. "They have the skills they need to get things done."

#### Promises delivered

Hodges and Payne succeeded by including the talent of election opponents in their administration.

After seniors Annie Davis and Courtney Kennedy were the first ticket eliminated, they publicly endorsed the Hodges-Payne ticket. After taking office, Hodges and Payne welcomed Davis and Kennedy as executives on the Board of Governance.

"Having Annie [Davis] and Courtney [Kennedy] on our board brings a lot we didn't have," Hodges said. "They are helping us to achieve more unified goals."

Davis and Kennedy also brought to the administration experience in College-wide government, as each had the Board of Governance credentials Hodges and Payne lack.

Hodges and Payne teamed up with the South Bend Tribune to be a part of [inthebend.com](http://inthebend.com), a multimedia Web site used to keep

the community abreast of campus events at Notre Dame, Saint Mary's and Holy Cross.

"By getting our name out in the community, we can bring more people to campus," Payne said.

The executive branch also co-sponsored a number of events this year to increase club awareness of BOG resources. Such events have included Food for Thought, a regular forum about student government; Booze, Bands and Boys, an orientation event for freshmen; the Student Diversity Board Bonfire; and the Saint Mary's Shirt.

Next semester, Hodges and Payne are turning their focus to policy. They intend to make changes to the new general education requirements at Saint Mary's, the BOG constitution and the BOG handbook.

"We must get the new board ready for next year and make sure things are in order," Hodges said. "Kelly [Payne] is working on changing the fiscal policy for student government and looking to increase funds."

They will also continue traditions like Heritage Week and SMC Tostal, the College's biggest annual event. This year, SMC Tostal will feature a performance by singer Colbie Cailatt on April 10.

Hodges and Payne attribute their success thus far to dedication and teamwork.

"The dedication has two parts: our dedication to deliver and our board's dedication to carry out what we envisioned last year and building off that," Hodges said.

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## Grade: B+

While they lacked BOG experience prior to the election, Hodges and Payne surrounded themselves with experienced members on the board, which helped them create a support system ready to act.

While many of their ideas are in the process of expanding, it is admirable that each of their campaign promises has been introduced to some degree this semester. Hodges and Payne accomplished a lot with great student support and without much resistance from the administration. However, their biggest challenges are yet to come, as they set out to focus on policy changes in the spring semester.

## BOARD OF GOVERNANCE

# Group encourages student involvement, funds events

Members organize monthly feedback forums, College-specific *The Shirt*, discuss extended coffee shop hours

By ASHLEY CHARNLEY  
In Focus Writer

Members of the Board of Governance have encouraged students to become more involved in campus events throughout the current term.

Student body president Kim Hodges and vice president Kelly Payne stressed establishing strong relations between the main groups on campus, from the administration to alumnae and students, and surrounded themselves with a board committed to the same goals.

"I think this year BOG is trying much harder to connect with the students to hear their concerns and voice them to the administration," said Sarita Fritzler, BOG chief of staff.

By increasing communication, BOG can be a more effective tool for students, she said.

"We wanted to work to connect the student body to BOG," Payne said.

The Board consists of 26 commissioners, representing various campus organizations and class boards. Groups represented include the

Residence Hall Association, Student Activities Board, Student Diversity Board and each of the four class boards. BOG meets weekly at 5 p.m. in the second floor of the Student Center.

The Board is responsible for co-sponsoring events, planning new activities and representing the student body to faculty and staff.

#### Board challenges

Poor attendance at many BOG-planned events has forced the board to plan less frequent activities and look for new ways to entice students to attend.

The board has been making attempts to give students a way to express their ideas, but the results have not always been what they had hoped for, Fritzler said.

The Food for Thought monthly forum is one of the ways BOG hoped students would be able to express their ideas.

Food for Thought, which originally was intended to occur weekly, is a discussion session that focuses on the role of BOG on campus and offers an opportunity for students to voice any concerns they might have. But a lack of interest in the event caused

the board to reduce the forum's frequency.

#### Higher attendance

While some of the events have produced low numbers, many have exceeded expectations, Fritzler said.

The launch of the Saint Mary's version of "The Shirt" had a turnout of close to 100 students, and scores attended the co-sponsored pep rally at Notre Dame.

However, despite the low attendance of other events, ways to improve turnout are not being discussed thoroughly at meetings.

Discussion at meetings has centered on co-sponsorships and a partnership with Sodexo, the food service provider for the College, to make changes to policies already in place.

The board's most notable change allowed students to bring backpacks into the dining hall during lunch hours. The menu has also changed to cater to student requests.

Extending Cyber Café hours was also at the repeated request of students.

#### Engagement

The board is trying to get the student body engaged, in both the College community and the

world outside the College.

"I would like to see BOG really raise awareness about the importance of being engaged with the students, involved and informed," Fritzler said.

Fritzler also said she wants BOG to help inform students of the upcoming 2008 presidential election.

Co-sponsorships are another large part of BOG's goals. The board receives funds to distribute among clubs and events. Most of the clubs asking for money will send representatives to appeal to BOG and to answer questions for the commissioners about why the funds are needed.

Payne also discussed future plans to raise money for BOG. She has been talking to Vice President for Student Affairs Karen Johnson about investing the board's money so it can create a rollover fund for next year. With more money, BOG can do more things for the students, Payne said.

"More programming and fundraising has taken place this year in an effort to connect the student body more to student government, especially BOG," Hodges said.

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## Grade: B-

BOG has been working hard to increase student involvement in activities and events on campus.

While several events were well attended, others were not, and more work could be done to explain low student attendance. While the board seems willing to work with students to allow them to express their ideas and opinions about the campus, the attendance issue needs to be resolved. Not much work has been done to work toward the board's goals, but there is potential to do so next semester.

STUDENT DIVERSITY BOARD

# Group raises awareness of disabilities, hunger

Spring agenda includes first-ever women's appreciation week, student leadership conference on immigration, green issues

By MANDI STIRONE  
In Focus Writer

The Student Diversity Board (SDB) has the ambitious purpose of facilitating understanding and cooperation among all Saint Mary's students while embracing the differences that make each of them unique.

With programming that seeks to appeal to people of all races, disabled or not, pro-immigration or not, and from every background, board president Abby Henchy said she thinks this year's board has built on the successes of its predecessors.

Henchy's very young board has been putting in a lot of effort to get the board's events and

messages out to students, she said. Almost half of the board is made up of first-year students — age is nothing but a number, she said — and the freshmen have really been “stepping up.” Henchy said the young leadership has contributed immensely to the board's successes this year by effectively promoting the group's events, like the annual SDB bonfire in October.

The bonfire, held indoors due to rain, was the board's “way of kind of welcoming the student body back to school,” she said. “It hasn't been outside in two or three years because of rain.”

But the event was a success nonetheless with a turnout of about 100 people, Henchy said.

The SDB also hosted another

annual event this year, the Hunger Banquet. While the banquet usually focuses on global poverty and hunger in general, this year organizers “focused on local poverty in the U.S. and then related it to world hunger,” Henchy said.

Last week the board held Disabilities Awareness Week, an multi-day event with various activities to raise awareness about the struggles of people with different disabilities. The board members hosted a deaf culture class, which about 40 people attended, and an eye-glass and sunglass drive that “has actually been a really big success,” Henchy said.

The success of Disabilities Awareness Week prompted her

and the board to plan another awareness week, one dedicated to women's appreciation.

“We figured we're an all-women's college,” Henchy said, “and it's never been done before.”

Details have yet to be worked out, but the Women's Appreciation Week is set for March 10-14.

The board is simultaneously planning its biggest event, the Diverse Students Leadership Conference, which will be held Feb. 13-15 and will focus on environmental justice, immigration, and women in business, she said.

One major goal for the conference's organizers this year is that “they want people to realize

it's student-led,” Henchy said. But they also hope to “step it up from last year” and have a bigger turnout, she said.

“[We] want to raise more awareness on Saint Mary's campus,” she said, “It should be much better than last year. We are hoping for more [students] than last year.”

The rest of the board's agenda includes two potential service projects for students next semester, she said. Members are organizing a drive and a service opportunity that can get students to work hand-in-hand with people from the local community, Henchy said.

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## Government in brief...

### Residence Hall Association holds events

The Residence Hall Association (RHA) has tried to create new programming this year that will benefit the student body and improve residence life on campus.

The RHA hosted activities like the “Go Belles” tailgate, an event to support Saint Mary's athletics and make people aware of the risks associated with alcohol use. They held a Hall Spirit week prior to the Duke pep rally, which Saint Mary's hosted. RHA also brought Erin Weed, the founder of the Web site [girlsfightback.org](http://girlsfightback.org), to speak on campus.

The RHA created the National Residence Hall Honorary

(NRHH), in which students can nominate people they feel have positively affected residence life on campus. There will be a banquet to honor these nominees during the spring semester.

For next semester, RHA has many activities planned, including the Saint Mary's All School Formal and Little Sibs weekend.

The Saint Mary's Formal will be held at the Palais Royale in downtown South Bend in February.

In March, Little Sibs weekend will bring siblings of Saint Mary's students to campus to take part in fun activities.

-Liz Harter



ANNIE HARTON/The Observer  
**Kim Hodges leads an Oct. 2 BOG meeting.**

### Student Activities Board plans activities

The Student Activities Board (SAB) has already accomplished its main goal of hosting successful and well-attended events at Saint Mary's this year, SAB president Cassie Callon said.

The group has planned multiple events to accommodate particular interests of the student body such as the Jamaica Shaka, the annual event which closes Freshman Orientation, and the Twilight Tailgate, which celebrates the last Notre Dame home football game with dinner and a movie, prizes, cotton candy and caramel apples on the library green.

The group has also hosted Recycled Percussion, a STOMP-

type musical act, and CL Lindsey, a Facebook safety lecturer, on campus.

“SAB is given a substantial amount of Saint Mary's students' activities fee every year, so we take planning activities that meet students' interests very seriously,” Callon said.

All of the group's events have been very well attended, Callon said.

SAB is also planning its biggest event of the second semester — SMC Tostal, which occurs each spring. This year, SAB is bringing singer Colbie Caillat to campus to perform at the event.

-Liz Harter

### Academic Council builds alum network

The Student Academic Council (SAC) includes a student representative from each major at the College. Its biggest project this year is the student ad hoc General Education Committee, which is working to revise the general education requirements at the College, student body vice president Kelly Payne said.

“Our goals for next semester include a large implementation of service learning within the majors and installing the Alumnae Resource Network on department advisors' computers so

they can show their students of the ARN,” Payne said.

The ARN allows students to access alumnae information for postgraduate employment or mentoring.

SAC also sponsors “Major of the Week.” This fall, art, political science, business, sociology and modern language departments have taken part in this event.

SAC is also planning a Dinner with the Deans for students to meet the deans and discuss concerns about academic life at Saint Mary's.

-Katie Kohler



ANNIE HARTON/The Observer  
**Kelly Payne writes a note during a BOG meeting on Dec. 3.**

### Senior works with Board of Trustees

As a student trustee sitting on the Saint Mary's Board of Trustees, senior Cate Cetta is a full voting member of the Board who also sits on the Board of Governance. Cetta's primary responsibility is giving the Board student input on important decisions.

Each spring, a student trustee is chosen from the rising senior class.

“My main goal is to deepen the connection of the students with the Board members through events that will bring the two groups together in settings where they are able to talk about the exciting things occur-

ring at Saint Mary's,” Cetta said.

Since becoming student trustee, Cetta has attended a June retreat and the first formal meeting of the Board in October. She will attend one meeting in February and another in April.

“My experience has been amazing,” she said. “I have been so fortunate to meet and work with people who truly love and want to make a difference at Saint Mary's.”

The student trustee is chosen through an application process and a series of interviews and is open to all rising seniors.

-Katie Kohler

### FIRST-YEAR BOARD

The first-year board has moved slowly this year. Its first event won't happen until Saturday when the freshman representatives host a study break in the Reignbeaux Lounge in LeMans Hall from 2 to 4 p.m., president Emma Hoffman said.

After winter break, the 13-member board will host the first-year formal, which might be modeled after a masquerade, Hoffman said.

The board also hopes to put together “some kind of service project,” Hoffman said. “We were thinking hopefully we can do something with the nuns,” she said, but the board has not yet discussed details.

-Mandi Stirone

### SOPHOMORE BOARD

The Sophomore Board has focused on fundraising to help children with cancer. The class raised money for the “Light the Night” walk for leukemia patients earlier this fall and hopes to plan a fundraiser to benefit Darfur next semester, president Camille Gerbert said.

One of her goals, she said, is to plan events that bring the sophomore class together — something she has tried to achieve by welcoming suggestions from all her classmates, rather than just those of people on the board. She said it's important for her to maintain a board that asks for feedback throughout the year to be able to organize events that appeal to more students.

-Liz Harter

### JUNIOR BOARD

The Junior Board used the entire semester to plan its signature event, Junior Mom's Weekend, which won't actually happen until April.

But class secretary Katie Putz said the event, which invites the juniors' mothers to spend a weekend on campus participating in various activities, is not the only thing the board has been working on.

The Board has already hosted a successful dance for the junior class, and it is presently selling candy-grams and making Christmas cards to benefit the College's “12 Days of Christmas” event to give back to the community.

-Liz Harter

### SENIOR BOARD

The Senior Board kicked off the year with the second annual “Let Your Sister Pick Your Mister” dance, president Colleen Kielty said. Another big event for the board this fall was Senior Dads' Weekend, held in October. Father-daughter activities included Beer Garden Night, a golf outing and “watching ND beat UCLA” at the College Football Hall of Fame, Kielty said.

The board is also selling a Saint Mary's cookbook for \$10 to collect funds for the College's ongoing “12 Days of Christmas” activities.

Senior Board is currently planning the Senior Formal, which might be held at the new Hilton Hotel on campus, Kielty said.

-Mandi Stirone