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# MID-YEAR MARKS

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

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PAGE 2:**

Notre Dame Office of the Student Body  
President and Vice President  
Notre Dame Class Councils

**PAGE 3:**

Saint Mary's Office of the Student Body  
President and Vice President  
Saint Mary's Class Boards

**PAGE 4:**

Student Government on Sexual Assault  
Student Union Board

**PAGE 5:**

Student Government on Diversity and Inclusion  
Council of Committee Chairs

**PAGE 6:**

Editorial  
Student Government on LGBTQ Issues

**PAGE 7:**

Saint Mary's Senate  
Campus Life Council  
Notre Dame Senate

**PAGE 8:**

Department Reviews

## ND STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

## Raising the bar

Coccia, Joyce engage students in constructive dialogue, implement community-building initiatives

By ANN MARIE JAKUBOWSKI  
News Editor

Since taking office April 1, student body president and vice president Alex Coccia and Nancy Joyce have checked off items left and right.

Recent initiatives included supporting University admissions policies to welcome undocumented students to campus, a week of awareness for mental health issues facing students and a coffee cart installed in DeBartolo Hall, all of which were goals included in their campaign platform. Though they have made progress through the concrete to-do list, Joyce said they are most proud of their success in engaging students who were not typically involved in student government.

"I'm really proud of the fact that we've gotten a lot of involvement from people, even outside of any sort of formalized committees," Joyce said. "I think we've done a pretty good job of trying to involve people who have opinions but who aren't necessarily interested in being involved with student government, and that's really what we wanted to do from Day One."

Coccia said personal, one-on-one interaction with members of the Notre Dame community has been key to his administration's policy-making.

"Even at the very beginning, we focused on how we approach one-on-one meetings and making sure we're doing a lot of those with students and administrators, to not only get initiatives going, but also to build important relationships," he said. "We do that every week with both administrators and students, and that has just come in immensely handy and has just been a powerful, powerful method for really working with students to get change going and build trust."

**Setting a standard**

Engaging in social media and

working to reach students where they are has been a crucial aspect of the administration's leadership, Coccia said. Joyce said during their term, they have been trying to "raise the expectations of what student government should be on campus."

"I think we've made a very concerted effort to engage freshmen, which is really important because now, for the next four years, the expectation of that and of every successive class is for a student government that reaches out to them and gives personal invitations to various invitations, a group that is known to them," she said. "On a more macro level of what student government is, we've really tried to make it something that people can expect a lot from, and that we deliver on it."

"Hopefully going forward, that bar has been raised a little bit."

Juan Rangel, chief of staff for this year's administration, said he has been "pleasantly surprised" by the level of student involvement and cooperation on campus.

"Students are really engaged on campus, not necessarily in a formalized way, but even just in the ways that we can reach them, whether through social networks like Facebook and Twitter or in events that we host," Rangel said. "Students are more aware that student government is active and that we're actively trying to meet their needs in any way. I think that's definitely something to be proud of."

**'Using the momentum'**

Coccia said he attributes much of the group's success in tackling the initiatives on the platform to the constant connection and interaction between members of the executive cabinet and with students outside the organization.

"If someone sends us an idea, we're typically going to follow up on that and try to get a better sense of what their thoughts are and how they see student government

fitting into that," he said. "I think the sexual assault [initiatives] are a great example of that. We definitely had that on our platform, but as something that we wanted to work on in whatever capacity we could."

Joyce said when examining ideas and reviewing priorities, at the end of the day, they "always go back to the platform."

"But at the same time, I think there's been a lot that's come up since we've been in office that had been generated by people coming up to us and saying 'Look, I have this idea' or 'I see this happening this way,' and I think we need that," she said. "We make that a priority."

The relationships built between administrators and student government have proven "really encouraging," Coccia said.

"Ultimately, I think administrators are impressed by student ideas, and so when we bring something to them like the coffee cart idea, more often than not, they want to get it done," he said. "Where student government comes in is just to be the best partner we can."

Rangel said their work often opens their eyes to the inner workings of the University, providing a unique view on the behind-the-scenes action. Coccia said he finds the activity across the strata exciting.

"It's certainly been encouraging for me to see on all levels of the University the number of moving parts on various initiatives," he said. "It really does become kind of a team effort across the University, because as students, we're all here to have a great learning experience and learning environment, and the administrators know that students are the reason they're here as well."

**Reviewing the semester**

Although the group members are pleased with their work to date, Joyce said they will revisit and review their remaining agenda items to pick up after winter break.

"When we started, we had this huge platform of things we wanted to get done, and we have gotten a lot done, but we certainly think that there are more things for us to accomplish," she said. "Part of being efficient in the next three months will be picking some of those things and prioritizing some of them."

"I think that we may not get every single thing checked off of our platform, so we want to make sure that we're getting as much done as we can and doing the most things that students feel are important."

Coccia said he hopes the recommendations made in the Oct. 17 report to the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees will help sustain some of the long-term projects beyond the one-year time frame in which they will hold office.

"Hopefully, this and the next board report in May will lay a blueprint of recommendations for future administrations," he said. "Ultimately, what we're trying to do is address the issues and bring the conversation up in a way that is going to prolong it and make sure it is sustained."

To increase the scope of projects, collaboration with groups outside student government has been a "huge success," Joyce said.

"We've really tried to reach out to lots of different people, in the dorms, all the clubs and the administration," she said. "I think it's important to realize that student government can work with other people."

**'Above and beyond'**

In addition to representing the student body, Coccia was a 2013 Truman scholar and a finalist for both the Rhodes and the Marshall scholarships. Joyce said his leadership so far has exemplified "setting the tone at the top."

"Alex would never say this because he's too humble, but the leadership comes from the top,

and his get-it-done attitude and his ability to really go out and figure out what it is that we can be doing is where the inspiration comes from for everybody else," she said. "I doubt that there are very many people on campus who don't recognize Alex, and I think that really says a lot."

"He's done such an incredible job of getting out and talking to people one-on-one and making people feel like their concerns are our concerns, because they are. I know as a team, there's a lot that we've done, but it certainly would not be the same without him, so I hope people know that."

Coccia said the group is "enjoying every day" and is excited to return to campus in January to finish the term strong.

"We're loving it. We're having a lot of fun," he said. "There are certainly frustrating days, and I think we recognize that things sometimes take more time than what we want, but it's been really fun."

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## GRADE: A

*The Coccia-Joyce administration has exceeded their goal of "raising the expectation of what student government should be on campus," as Joyce said. Having enacted tangible changes, they have already left a unique legacy on Notre Dame and have set a new standard of excellence in the student government office. The accessible and energetic leadership style exemplified by Coccia, Joyce and their cabinet makes them effective leaders and connects them to their constituents' needs.*

## ND CLASS COUNCILS

**FRESHMAN CLASS COUNCIL:**

Freshman Class Council (FCC) coordinated a Halloween dance, a concession stand during the Brigham Young game weekend and a class rosary event at the Grotto this semester. "Overall, our goal in FCC is to create freshman unity," president Andrew Green said. "All our events have been reasonably successful in that aspect." Green said FCC hopes to improve its communication with the freshman class via the class Facebook page, "Notre Dame Class of 2017," the Twitter account, @ND17\_, and email address, [class17@nd.edu](mailto:class17@nd.edu). "Our hope is to have our class outreach grow," Green said. Other plans for next semester include a skate night at the Compton Family Ice Arena, a First Year of Studies event and a "FROSH week" in March with social and service events for the class.

**SOPHOMORE CLASS COUNCIL:**

This semester, Sophomore Class Council (SCC) aimed to create events that "draw people from different quads, majors and social groups," president Jake Grefenstette said. SCC's most successful event this fall was a Great Gatsby-themed dance outside Bond Hall in September. SCC co-sponsored the dance with the Junior Class Council. "One NDSP officer counted over 2,000 attendees [at the dance] and said it was the biggest and liveliest event he had seen in his 30 years at Notre Dame," Grefenstette said. Next semester, SCC hopes to host a spring dance, a class retreat and faculty talks. It aims to create opportunities for long-term service projects, capitalizing on the Council's relationship with the South Bend Center for the Homeless.

**JUNIOR CLASS COUNCIL:**

Junior Class Council tried to cater to the wishes of the junior class this semester by sponsoring a Great Gatsby dance, planning a volleyball tournament called "Santa, Set, Spike" and organizing a "Day in South Bend," when local businesses offered discounts to members of the class of 2015. Other popular events included the "Star-Spangled Send-Off," which targeted students who will study abroad in the spring, and discounted tickets to the show "Cabaret." "Next semester, we plan on holding more study breaks around finals, an organized trip to Chicago and a retreat for members of the class of 2015," president Olivia LaMagna said.

**SENIOR CLASS COUNCIL:**

In an effort to bring the class of 2014 together, Senior Class Council hosted a class Mass, an apple-picking event and a Cornhole tournament that benefitted the Center for the Homeless. President Carolina Wilson said the council hopes to continue to organize fun events that include food, while also giving seniors resources that will benefit them after graduation, like information about financing, budgeting and investments. She said to look for the upcoming "Sip and Taste South Bend" restaurant tour. "We want to provide seniors with a year that is fun and memorable, but also beneficial," Wilson said. "This way, when graduation rolls around, seniors will not only be ready for whatever comes next, but will also look back on their last year at Notre Dame with great memories."

## SMC STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

# Establishing a presence on campus

*Sullivan, Martin foster unity within the SMC community, look to finalize constitution and by-laws*

By **KAITLYN RABACH**  
Saint Mary's Editor

Since taking office April 1, Saint Mary's student body president and vice president Kat Sullivan and Maddy Martin have worked with members of Student Government Association (SGA) to promote unity on campus and to increase transparency between student government and the student body.

When the duo chose to run for office last spring, they focused their platform on three main issues: encouraging better communication with SGA board members, making SGA more transparent and emphasizing community participation.

"Whenever we pick a board member, plan an event or make a decision, we think about these goals," Sullivan said. "This year, we have really been able to create a sense of community within student government, and we worked hard to pick people in SGA that would go off and running with their positions. Having people in student government that are passionate about SGA, that are passionate about Saint Mary's and really want to make a change here on campus, is one way we can focus on these goals."

## Presence on campus

Martin said vocal, passionate members of student government, as well as social media campaigns, have enabled this SGA administration to have one of the most visible presences on campus in recent history.

"I think we have done a really great job of having a presence on campus," Martin said. "It is not necessarily that we are sponsoring events every day, but rather that we are constantly updating our Facebook page, utilizing OrgSync and posting photos on Instagram. At a small school, we have the ability to be recognizable, and I think we are."

After attending an American Student Government Association seminar last summer, Martin said, she wanted to encourage students to view SGA as more than just a club.

"We were taught to think of ways to set ourselves apart as a full governing body," Martin said.

As part of their campaign to engage more with the student body, Martin said she and Sullivan have encouraged the use of the Belle Tower through OrgSync, the website used to facilitate club registration. Martin said because members of the campus community now understand OrgSync better, more people have gone to club events.

"On average, in just one day, at least 800 different people access the Belle Tower," Martin said. "That is a good portion of our student body, and the numbers have definitely increased since last year. We push our board to utilize OrgSync as much as possible. Anything like sign-ups for the upcoming Chicago trip to registering for the Navy Dance are done on OrgSync."

Sullivan said she and Martin implemented event evaluation forms for all members of SGA, in order to ensure they attend events sponsored by different groups on campus.

"We created this form for our board asking each of our board members, including ourselves, to fill out three event evaluations per semester," Sullivan said. "This is a way to keep people accountable, and it is also a good way to get feedback."

## Following the word's of Sr. Madeleva

Sullivan and Martin said their administration's motto is the words of Sr. Madeleva Wolff, the College's third president: "Every one of you has some part in the making of every other student. This is a fact,

a privilege, a responsibility." "This quote really embodies what we are trying to do," Sullivan said. "I think this can be said for our work with Belles Beginnings and for our work with Support a Belle, Love a Belle [SABLAB]."

To kick off this year, Martin and Sullivan focused on facilitating personal interaction between members of the class of 2017 and the College's student leaders during first-year orientation. Sullivan said these changes to orientation directly resulted from her and Martin's goal of engaging with the larger campus community.

"This year we played such an active role in Belles Beginnings, and the first years know who we are, and they know we are a resource for them on this campus," Sullivan said. "That is huge."

After recognizing mental illness as an issue on college campuses, Sullivan and Martin decided to address the often-stigmatized topic by dedicating a week to promoting dialogue about mental health. This week was called "Support a Belle, Love a Belle" and was the third of its kind. Sullivan and Martin said this week, which occurred in October, was one of their most significant accomplishments so far.

"Teaming up with the tri-campus community and including Notre Dame and Holy Cross on this week was a good decision," Sullivan said. "I think mental health discussion is very important and is often not talked about as much as it should be across the nation."

Sullivan said Belles attended the week's events to support their peers.

"The most successful event was 'Share Your Story,' where students shared their struggles with mental health," Sullivan said. "A large portion of the

community came to support their peers. ... Also, at the prayer service at the Grotto, students from Saint Mary's walked over. We had about 30 to 40 Saint Mary's girls there."

## Looking forward

Based on midterm evaluations, Martin said SGA members are pleased with the work of student government overall and look forward to continuing their work next semester.

"Overall, we have had pretty good reviews from our board," Martin said. "Again, it is just important for us to evaluate as a board and as a student body as a whole because we cannot just pat ourselves on the back. We need to know if we are being as efficient and effective as possible."

To capitalize on this efficiency, Sullivan said the group will continue to edit its constitution and bylaws next semester.

"Every council has bylaws, and we have had our senators look at our constitution, and we are editing those," Sullivan said. "By turnover, our constitution will be revised, which is good because in looking at it now, there are some gray areas, and there shouldn't be gray areas when you are a governing board."

Martin said this accords with SGA's goal of transparency and its desire for all members of the body to have clear, defined positions.

"Our constitution is on our OrgSync page with our bylaws for people to reference," Martin said. "Right now, we are editing the positions so you know exactly what you are getting into. This will also hold people accountable."

The duo said they plan to look deeper into sexual assault prevention on campus next semester. "I think a lot of that comes down to really promoting the resources that are already on campus, like BAVO [the Belles Against Violence Office] and more so,

giving students an understanding of what those resources are, what they do and how it can help," Sullivan said. Looking toward the future, Sullivan said she wants her administration to continue to promote unity within student government and amongst the greater student body. She said this would encourage people who are eager to make a difference on campus to become more involved.

"I am looking forward to seeing how things will change within the next few years," Sullivan said. "Hopefully, this administration can help prepare the future leaders of Saint Mary's College."

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## GRADE: A

*The Sullivan-Martin administration has successfully increased the use of OrgSync, resulting in a more informed student body. They have executed some of the key points from their campaign platform, such as increasing community participation and creating more dialogue between student government and the student body. They increased student government's presence on campus with their changes to Belles Beginnings and their sponsorship of Support a Belle, Love a Belle. These passionate leaders inspire their board members to create positive change on campus and so far, their board has delivered.*

## SMC CLASS BOARDS

### FIRST-YEAR BOARD:

The Saint Mary's Freshman Class Board aspired to cultivate sisterhood within the community while simultaneously raising awareness for mental health. Freshmen worked alongside Sophomore Class Council to co-host Barn Yard Belles in Dalloway's Coffeehouse. Ellen Raymond, freshman class president, said the event provided an opportunity for first- and second-year students to form friendships through country dancing, eating and pumpkin-decorating. "Next semester, the Freshman Council will be participating in Love Your Body Week," Raymond said. "All of these fun and relaxing activities will cater to the student body's mental health." Raymond said her board is also looking forward to hosting a Masquerade Formal for the class of 2017.

### SOPHOMORE CLASS BOARD:

The Sophomore Class Board aims to promote a sisterly atmosphere on the Saint Mary's campus through event-planning and fundraising. This semester, the board exceeded its fundraising goal of \$500. Brie O'Brien, president of the sophomore class, said members of her board planned and executed Barnyard Belles Fall Festival, sold class gear on two occasions and adopted an underprivileged family for Christmas. Next semester, the board will host Sophomore Parents' Weekend and a class of 2016 ice skating event in the Compton Ice Arena — both of which the team has begun to plan. "As a board, our overall goals are to raise funds for our class's line account and provide opportunities for the class of 2016 to practice the core values of Saint Mary's, form friendships and have an amazing experience at SMC within their own class, as well as with the entirety of the Saint Mary's community," O'Brien said.

### JUNIOR CLASS BOARD:

The Junior Class Board provided Saint Mary's students with a variety of experiences, products and fundraisers this semester. Board president Nicole O'Toole said the group played a key part in planning the Navy Dance for the Naval Academy Midshipmen in October and sponsored a student trip to Chicago in December. Both events were open to all students and crossed class aisles. The board fundraised with a Let's Spoon give-back day, and members sold personalized products created by Courtney Bock Designs, a local business run by an alumna. This semester, the board participated in the Adopt-a-Family program and donated toys, clothes, and a WalMart gift card for its adopted family's Christmas dinner. Next semester, the group will prepare for Junior Mom's Weekend in April, continue its philanthropy and host a T-shirt sale.

### SENIOR CLASS BOARD:

The Saint Mary's Senior Class Board kicked off the fall semester with Senior Dads Weekend, an annual event that invites seniors' fathers to campus to spend quality time with their daughters. The weekend began with a beer garden and a silent auction that benefitted the senior class, president Carolyn Backes said. Fathers and daughters played golf, toured campus and celebrated Mass. The two-day event closed with a game-watch at CJ's Pub on South Michigan Street. After Dads Weekend, the senior class board focused on co-hosting the Navy Dance, Backes said. With the first semester of the members' last year out of the way, the Senior Class Board has begun preparations for Senior Week. "The board has a schedule of that week with events including an alumnae brunch, a wine-tasting [event] in Michigan and a blessing of Saint Mary's traditional class rings," Backes said. "The Senior Class Board is very excited to begin our last semester at Saint Mary's College, where we have already made a number of unforgettable memories."

## STUDENT GOVERNMENT ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

# Administrations respond to sexual assault

By **TORI ROECK**  
Associate News Editor

Sexual assault response and prevention have been integral components of the Notre Dame and the Saint Mary's student government administrations this semester.

Notre Dame student body president Alex Coccia said a "sense of urgency" seized both campuses at the beginning of the school year when students received two campuswide emails in one weekend reporting a rape and an attempted rape.

These announcements came as a shock to the Notre Dame community, Coccia said, and both student government administrations responded with increased programming concerning sexual assault.

"I think what we realized with the emails and the conversation that happened at the beginning of the year was that we can have a greater role in addressing this issue," he said, "and, in fact, if we're actually going to address it to a point where we start to change attitudes and culture, it's got to come from students."

Coccia said after students received the third sexual assault email of the semester, student government initiated prayer services at the Grotto following every campuswide email. He said this decision formalized an idea developed in Campus Life Council.

"With the prayer services, I think we view them in two different ways," he said. "For one, it's a moment of healing for people who need it, and I think it does show that there are many in the community who are healing and want healing."

"At the same time, it's also an action that shows immense solidarity, and for the people who show up, it says that there are a lot of people who want to have this conversation and who want to make things change."

"But it certainly is a prayer service, and it certainly is a time of reflection on the issue. The three that we've had have been really beautiful, well-attended, and the fact that

students are the ones running the prayer services and the ones preparing the reflections and the call to actions is all the more powerful."

Coccia said Keenan Hall rector Noel Terranova and Fr. Pete McCormick are working to finalize the format of the prayer services for future administrations.

Notre Dame student body vice president Nancy Joyce said conversations in Senate regarding sexual assault have raised awareness of the issue on campus and have helped student government to implement other initiatives.

"Senate has been a really interesting means of talking about [sexual assault] because one, it's a lot of younger students, a lot of undergrads, and also it's a group of 50 people that come from a lot of different places and a lot of different perspectives," Joyce said.

"I have spoken to some of them who have said that they have had conversations with their friends. At the end of the day, to me at least, as the chair of Senate, that's what I want to have happened. I want people to see this as enough of an issue that they go talk to their friends about it, and if they talk to three friends about it and 50 people do that, well, there you go, that's 150 people."

Senate played a role in amending the text of the campuswide emails sent by Notre Dame Security Police (NDSP) to say "sexual battery" instead of "forcible fondling" and to be more respectful to victims of sexual assault, Joyce said.

"In thinking about 'forcible fondling' versus 'sexual battery,' ... even though 'forcible fondling' is a legal term, that is just something that people associate with something humorous for some reason or another," she said. "The other piece of it is that the emails are not personal enough which I think is something that's inherent a little bit in an email communication to the whole student body."

"It's going to be somewhat impersonal, but I think it's something that's gotten better. The last part of it was that the wording at the end of the email was sort of suggestive of the victim or survivor being



MICHAEL YUJ | The Observer

*Campus minister Fr. Pete McCormick speaks to students gathered at the Grotto to pray for victims of sexual assault on campus on Sept. 22. Student government holds prayer services after every new email report.*

somewhat responsible."

Junior Monica Daegele, student government's director of gender issues, worked with NDSP and with Title IX coordinator Dr. Bill Stackman to institute the changes, Joyce said.

Another result of conversations in Senate was a student-only discussion about sexual assault, which took place Nov. 20, Joyce said. She said the meeting helped to organize students interested in promoting sexual-assault prevention in preparation for student government's "One is Too Many" door-to-door pledge campaign, set to begin in January.

"The motivation behind [the student-only discussion] was a couple things: one, to get people in a room who don't typically talk about [sexual assault] or who have a lot of sway in their dorms and might be able to add to the conversation but don't normally have those kinds of conversations, and then also to start building our group of people who are going to help us with the campaign," Joyce said.

Coccia said of the 70 attendants that night, 40 signed up to lead door-to-door discussions for the "One is Too Many" campaign, while all 70 agreed to volunteer in some other way.

"We were really excited because I think the conversation there was very genuine," he said. "I think people brought up the types of

concerns and reflections that we imagined would also come up in these one-on-one conversations for the pledge campaign, and so I think it was a good preview for us, in terms of gauging what that conversation looks like."

For the Saint Mary's Student Government Association (SGA), sexual assault prevention programming began before school even started, student body president Kat Sullivan said. All leaders within SGA received green-dot training, a national certification program for preventing sexual violence, she said.

This year, green-dot training was expanded to athletes as well, student body vice president Maddy Martin said. Members of the College's basketball and volleyball teams received the training in order to act as better bystanders in situations where there is a risk of sexual assault, she said.

Martin said this year's administration wanted to incorporate similar training into first-year orientation.

"Student government wasn't really present in regards to Welcome Week, so we wanted to make sure that we, as leaders, were seen as soon as our first years came on campus," she said. "So we wanted to, again, be able to promote stuff that they may face, coming in as first years. And we thought that this was a great way to implement

our leadership and help them out, so they could come to us."

During Welcome Week, student government led Know the Facts presentations about alcohol, sexual assault, depression and anxiety, Sullivan said.

"I feel like being a freshman in college, you're 18, you're finally considered an adult, so it's important for us to have that open and honest discussion about these sorts of issues," she said. "We're not here to baby you. You're taking control of your own life."

Sullivan said she thinks student government should inform students of the resources already available on campus for dealing with sexual assault.

"We realized that it's really important for us to emphasize the resources that are already available," she said. "We don't want to be repetitive with what the students already have, and so we really want to piggy back on [the Belles Against Violence Office] and make sure that we're helping advertise and promote their events, because we are such a presence on campus."

"I think that [sexual assault] is a major social issue in general, and, especially coming from a women's college, it's important that we are familiar with this issue and how to address it."

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## ND STUDENT UNION BOARD

## SUB consults students, anticipates spring

By **CHRISTIAN MYERS**  
News Writer

Senior Kaitlyn Keelin, executive director of the Student Union Board (SUB), said the group strongly emphasized consulting students to determine the organization's offerings this semester.

"We've been focusing on getting more student input and collecting a lot of data so that we can plan events that students want to see on campus," Keelin said.

SUB also tried to document its internal processes and

procedures in order to make the group more consistent year-to-year, Keelin said.

SUB's most-attended event of the semester was Comedy on the Quad, in which comedian Jim Gaffigan drew approximately 4,000 students to his performance on South Quad, Keelin said. She said other popular SUB events included a presentation by "Breaking Bad" star R.J. Mitte, a Legends stand-up comedy performance by SNL's Nasim Pedrad and a Legends concert featuring Eric Hutchinson.

The annual Fall Mall sale organized by SUB also stood out, with more sales this year than ever before, Keelin said.

Keelin said SUB's biggest challenge was a lack of participation in the Purdue Ticket Lottery. She said SUB purchased the tickets from the Athletic Department at face value last spring, so they lost out when reduced-price tickets became widely available from other sources, such as StubHub, and few students opted for the ticket lottery.

The final SUB event of the

semester, Stress Relievers, will take place Sunday from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Notre Dame Room and the ballroom of the LaFortune Student Center, Keelin said. The event will feature free food, energy drinks and massages, she said. SUB will also use the event to garner student input about the artist they will bring in for the annual spring concert and about which movies SUB will play on its movie nights.

Keelin said the spring semester will feature several large-scale events, including the Collegiate

Jazz Festival, the Notre Dame Literary Festival, the Holy Half, The SUB Concert and AnTostal week.

Next semester, SUB will also distribute frequent moviegoer passes that enable students who regularly attend SUB movies to earn free admission, Keelin said.

Keelin said the spring's kick-off event will be a fireside talk and a networking reception with Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian.

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## STUDENT GOVERNMENT ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

# Leaders reimagine diversity, inclusion

By **NICOLE MICHELS**  
Assistant Managing Editor

Student body leaders at Notre Dame and Saint Mary's targeted issues of racial and cultural inclusion this year by developing programming, orchestrating community-building initiatives and advocating for institutional changes.

Notre Dame student body president Alex Coccia said he believes the difficult nature of conversations about race challenges students attempting to dialogue about issues of diversity and inclusion. The student government administration's role is to facilitate that dialogue, he said.

"I think, overall, what we recognized is that race is a tough issue to talk about on campus," Coccia said. "And because so many of these issues of violence or harassment or discrimination are under a layer of silence, we don't know about them, and it makes it even more difficult to talk about them."

Student body vice president Nancy Joyce said their administration aims to create events that foster communication.

"There are two things that I think we can pinpoint going forward as something we can work on. One is kind of creating this safe space for the conversations to happen," Joyce said. "The other thing is that I think Notre Dame students ... when they don't feel like they are an expert on the topic that they don't think they can engage in a real conversation.

"Maybe, on our part, that's helping to educate students, whether that's co-sponsoring forum discussions or different lectures, whatever it may be, trying to bring those kinds of things — the educational piece — into the mainstream, and trying to get people talking.

"That's something that is definitely doable between now and [the end of the administration's term on] March 31st."

Coccia said the student body's recognition of the need to focus on racial and cultural inclusion grew after the 2012 inception of the Call

to Action movement. This group formed as a partnership between student government, student-group leaders and select members of the administration after the town-hall meeting called to address the discriminatory incidents inflicted upon the Black Students Association (BSA) and African Students Association (ASA) in February of that year.

Joyce said student government has worked to extend initiatives from past year, in order to "bring some of the conversations from the margins into the mainstream."

Student government has focused on connecting with individuals in the Office of Student Affairs and on the President's Oversight Committee on Diversity and Inclusion in order to garner University support for student-led initiatives, she said.

Their administration also has worked to support the Diversity Council, a body comprised of 29 clubs that include the historically underrepresented communities on campus, Coccia said.

On Dec. 5, the Diversity Council submitted a resolution to the University with recommendations on how to improve the Notre Dame experience for all members of its community, and student senate passed a resolution supporting all measures of the Diversity Council's resolution Nov. 20.

"[Senior] Luis [Llanos] has done a fantastic job with Diversity Council, which is really important, especially with how he talks about the resolution that was just sent up," Coccia said. "This resolution was not just some list of recommendations that people pulled out of a hat. No, it was after months of discussion and debate following from the Call to Action and other student initiatives like the MEChA [Movimiento de Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan] surveys a couple years ago, and agreed upon by all of the different groups represented on Diversity Council.

"Twenty-nine groups unanimously agreed upon the fact that these are the [initiatives] that are

going to make members of their communities more welcome on campus. That argument could not have been made, were the Diversity Council not as strong as it is."

Llanos, chair of the Diversity Council, said the group will work with student government and administrators to determine which points can be addressed quickly, while developing a long-term plan.

"Because the communities in our clubs are minorities in number, we make sure that their voices are not drowned out whenever there is an important issue. In this way, we work hand-in-hand with student government. ... I'm happy to say there have been direct lines of communication and close coordination between DC and student government, something that had not been very present in the past," he said.

Coccia said he believes the coordinated, institutional effort will be crucial to efforts to improve the degree of inclusivity on campus.

"If you don't have institutional support or if there doesn't seem to be institutional support, it's an ever harder conversation to have," Coccia said. "Without that institutional support, you miss out on a lot of people who could be engaged in the conversation. That's why it's generally very important, when we talk about people having this conversation, we don't want it to be alienating.

"Ultimately, we're talking about what is going to make our community more welcoming to all. ... I think working with Diversity Council like we have, using various avenues that we have access to ... to make it clear that this is a priority among students is really where student government fits in."

Saint Mary's student body president Kat Sullivan said her team has worked to support the efforts of the Saint Mary's Student Diversity Board [SDB]. Senior and SDB President Maria Del Carmen Cardenas, as well as senior and Vice President of SDB Lucy Macfarlane, plan cultural programming and foster communication at the



EMILY KRUSE | The Observer

**Alex Coccia, Notre Dame student body president, has focused his administration on supporting the Diversity Council's recommendations.**

College in their capacities on SDB.

"[Saint Mary's student body vice president] Maddy [Martin] and I are very proud of how hard Carmen and Lucy have worked to really get SDB to where it needs to be this year. They're approaching diversity in a new and innovative way," Sullivan said.

SDB, comprised of 30 representatives from various ethnic and cultural clubs, works to unite the College community in "celebration of all cultural diversity of every woman on campus," Cardenas said.

"[Cardenas] likes to say that the Student Diversity Board is like the United Nations of Saint Mary's — we try to make sure that everyone is at the table, everyone is heard," Macfarlane said.

Cardenas said the group plans to focus on including international students in the College's cultural events, while continuing to coordinate the activity of the clubs on the Board. She herself also sits on the Presidential Council of Multicultural Affairs, she said.

The fall bonfire and the spring Student Diversity Leadership Conference are the highlights in their calendar, which includes issue weeks highlighting different topics

for the community, Cardenas said.

Cardenas said she and Macfarlane use an innovative definition of diversity to orient the work of SDB.

"I know [people] sometimes think of diversity as being just racial and ethnic, but for us, we took it a step further," Cardenas said. "We expanded it to economic diversity, religious diversity, sexuality, gender identity — any part of your identity that you feel makes you, you, we want to make sure that is talked about."

Macfarlane said this definition of diversity is personally important to her, as well.

"When we were talking about the way our campus thinks about diversity, [we realized] it's just race and ethnicity," Macfarlane said. "You know, 'You look different from me, you're diverse.' The joke is always like, 'Lucy, why are you on Diversity Board? You're just this white girl.'"

"Well, I have my own background, too, and that's just as important, and we want to create that safe environment.

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## SMC COUNCIL OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS

## Group designs programming to enrich College

By **REBECCA O'NEIL**  
News Writer

Student Government Association's Council of Committee Chairs (CCC) sought to be transparent to the student body this semester, CCC director Kelly Gutrich said.

Gutrich, a junior, said 12 committee chairs worked to address students' needs. Those committees include Missions, Media Relations, Sustainability, Sophia Program, Food, International, Community, Sports, Social Concerns, Alumnae, First-Year Concerns and Technology.

"We brainstorm together, and sometimes issues from Senate are

then brought to our specific chairs to look into more," Gutrich said. "We meet weekly together, which really helps up be able to collaborate across committees."

Sophomore Gloria Zeiger represents the Sustainability Committee, while juniors Katie Stare and Rachel Weir serve the Food Council Committee. Gutrich said the two committees teamed up to plan and execute this year's Food Week, which featured exceptional food at the dining hall.

"Students got to meet with the director of the dining hall [Barry Bowles] and voice praise, questions and concerns," Gutrich said.

The Social Concerns Council chair, junior Sam Moorhead,

had an especially busy semester, Gutrich said. Moorhead promoted Support A Belle, Love a Belle — a week-long program that promoted mental-health awareness.

"One of the most popular events was the 'Share your Story' event, where a group of five students from a variety of years shared their own struggles and triumphs while dealing with mental illness," Gutrich said. "This really showed how prevalent this issue is on campus but allowed students to bond together in a community of support for those struggling."

Lauren Osmani and Aneth Batamuliza, the Technology Committee's co-chairs, maintained communication

between the Office of Information Technology, SGA and the student body.

"Our technology chairs have been working with [junior] Anna Ulliman, who interned with Google this summer, to promote technology on campus by hosting 'Google talks,'" Gutrich said.

Gutrich said the Council will be especially busy planning campus-wide events next semester.

"This summer will be the 50th year of the death of Sister Madeleva and will give Heritage Week a really special aspect this year," Gutrich said. "Also, Love Your Body week is always an extremely popular event on campus. Various workout classes,

discussion panels and alumnae speakers will be a part of the week this year."

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### GRADE: A

*The Council of Committee Chairs has been one of the more successful councils in SGA this year, producing successful campaigns.*

# A challenge: speak for all voices

## Observer Editorial Board

As we look for words with which to characterize the student government administration of Alex Coccia and Nancy Joyce, the word “activism” comes to mind. So do the words “inclusion,” “conversation” and “justice.”

These words represent the substance of this administration’s leadership: They are working to empower the community to combat issues that divide it. Coccia and Joyce set the bar high during their campaign and first months in office at the end of last school year, and they have made progress on much of their original agenda.

In Coccia’s May 1 State of the Student Union address to student-body leaders, he outlined an ambitious array of goals, and we at The Observer have seen movement on nearly all of them. His Nov. 20 State of the Student Union address demonstrated similar success and a continuing drive to move forward on issues of utmost importance to our campus.

More importantly, these efforts

have occupied a very visible space on our campus. Planning town-hall events, orchestrating prayer services, executing events and fostering dialogue between students and community stakeholders — we see their work, we see their progress on issues big and small and we commend them for that effort.

If one person within our community feels hurt by exclusion or discrimination, that alone should drive us. And according to information in the report submitted by Coccia and Joyce to the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, 7 percent of students said they have not had an overall satisfactory experience here at Notre Dame.

In this report, submitted on behalf of the student body, Coccia and Joyce highlighted several issues on which they called for action: racial and ethnic diversity, sexual orientation and gender issues, socioeconomic status and immigration.

We highlighted three specific issues in this Insider because we

believe work in these areas has been at the heart of the Coccia-Joyce administration. And these issues are important to address so that all feel welcome and comfortable in the Notre Dame community.

While these issues are of the utmost importance and we are proud to see Coccia and Joyce make progress on them, these issues do not encompass everything and everyone at Notre Dame. When The Observer spoke with Coccia about the foci of his administration, he said they work to empower students so that they “feel welcome on campus and have a sense of ownership for their academic, residential, spiritual and extracurricular environments.”

“Nancy and I were elected with the expectation, among students and administrators, that we would use the opportunity to not just make convenient changes and additions to student life, but to raise the student voice in areas that are too often neglected — the issues of sexual assault and racial and ethnic inclusion fit into the latter

category. ... We really do believe in our classmates and our friends and in their ability to be a positive force for good in the world.”

Here is where we perceive a problem. Who defines what good the world needs, what justice is? If we return to the four buzzwords at the beginning of this editorial, only “conversation” has a precise meaning. Inclusion, activism, justice — who gets to define these abstract ideas?

To our student body president and vice president, we repeat our commendation for all of your hard work and for your focus in making sure every student feels safe and welcomed on campus. However, we challenge you to consider that some of the issues you elevate in your work might not represent many of our 8,452 undergraduates, especially those who disagree with your prioritization and approach to these issues and those who don’t know exactly where they stand.

We believe the primary duty of a student government administration is to represent all of the student body: left, right, center and off

the ideological map. And though the progress made by this student government administration on certain issues is remarkable, it neglects students who have different views on what “good” is, what “justice” is.

The conversation should not be defined by The Observer Editorial Board, by the student government administration or by only the student groups that mobilize their participants effectively. Instead, we believe our student-body government should represent all of the student body, even those members who do not exercise a loud voice. Though the Coccia-Joyce administration said they are working to solicit opinions and engage students, we do not see this communication represented in their formulation of broad-scale initiatives.

We give the leaders of this administration a grade of “A” because their work truly has been outstanding, but we also challenge them to think about ways in which their approach has been limited so that we can continue to work toward a better campus community.

## STUDENT GOVERNMENT ON LGBTQ ISSUES

# PrismND establishes bylaws, unites allies

By **MARISA IATI**  
Assistant Managing Editor

Although student body president Alex Coccia does not identify LGBTQ concerns as a priority of his administration, he said student government supported the implementation of the University’s “Beloved Friends and Allies” pastoral plan.

Specifically, Coccia said he and student body vice president Nancy Joyce sat on the selection panel for the assistant director who would address LGBTQ student concerns. He said he also named a student representative to the advisory committee on LGBTQ issues to Vice President for Student Affairs Erin Hoffmann Harding.

“One of our recommendations in the [Oct. 17] Board of Trustees report was that the [advisory] council meet regularly ... that it gets off to a good start,” Coccia said. “The purpose is essentially to gauge campus climate on LGBTQ inclusion and help make recommendations to [Hoffmann Harding] as we move forward on this issue.”

In the report to the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees, Coccia’s administration recommended the advisory committee meet for the first time no later than Thanksgiving break and gather four times in the spring 2014 semester. The administration also suggested the Office of Student Affairs “engage in action-oriented conversation regarding transgender students in the University housing system.”

In his May 1 State of the Student

Union address, Coccia said his administration backed the LGBTQ student organization PrismND, and reiterated his administration’s support in an interview with The Observer.

“We plan to fully support the implementation of the new LGBTQ and ally student organization as it is incorporated into the student unions... and we look forward to the honor of co-sponsoring one of their initial events,” Coccia said in the address.

This group now can assume the role played by the former LGBTQ student group, which operated without official University approval.

“Students had a huge victory a year ago, which was the recognition of the LGBTQ student group,” Coccia said. “Many of the efforts that I think were necessary [before] ... can now be facilitated by PrismND.”

The founding members of PrismND began to develop the group’s bylaws last semester, Coccia said.

“Then we started to formalize them a bit more, make the language consonant with what organization languages are and what organization bylaws look like, which includes components of funding and membership and meeting logistics,” he said. “Then it was back-and-forth conversation ... to ensure that the bylaws were solid and reflective of what the purpose of the organization was.”

Sophomore Connor Hayes, co-president of PrismND, said the club finalized its bylaws in early

October, with the exception of one part that was solidified earlier this week.

Co-president Bryan Ricketts said PrismND’s first major event was a celebration of National Coming Out Day on Oct. 11. The group set up “closet” structures outside DeBartolo Hall and the LaFortune Student Center and encouraged students to “come out” as anything — a member of the LGBTQ community, a fan of country music, a peace studies major or something else.

Ricketts, a sophomore, said PrismND also sponsored a National Coming Out Day lunch with Pasquerilla East Hall. He said two speakers at the lunch discussed the concept of coming out both from an academic perspective and on a personal level.

PrismND’s other main event this semester was StaND Against Hate Week from Nov. 4 through 8, Hayes said. The week, which the Gender Relations Center and Multicultural Student Programs and Services co-sponsored, featured a “What It Means to be an Ally” dinner, two lectures and a candlelight prayer service.

Hayes said, between 20 and 30 people attend the group’s organizational meetings, every other week. He said next semester PrismND will hold separate meetings in which people can discuss issues they face.

The organizational meetings do not serve this function because they are mainly meant as time for planning events, Ricketts said.

“They’re not necessarily a space



XULE LINE | The Observer

***In response to the University declining to add sexual orientation to its non-discrimination clause April 25, 2012, students held a candlelight vigil on the Fieldhouse Mall.***

where community can grow,” he said. “We want to have a space where people can just come and talk about issues on campus, issues they’re having, issues they see in the world outside of the Notre Dame bubble.”

PrismND aims to be a welcoming space for all parts of the LGBTQ and ally communities on campus, Hayes said.

“We want to make sure that [the group] doesn’t develop some sort of reputation of being associated with certain things, associated with certain parts of the University. Someone could be like, ‘Oh, that’s a liberal part of the University, and I identify as gay, but I’m kind of conservative, and I don’t think I feel at home there.’

“That kind of thing — making sure that it is as inclusive as

possible. ... I think that’s kind of a guiding principle to a lot of things that we do.”

Hayes said now that PrismND’s working dynamics are established, the group aims to host more programming next semester.

LGBTQ concerns remain a “very personal priority” for Coccia, he said.

“We’ve really come to a new step in campus culture,” Coccia said. “The way I like to frame it ... is two-and-a-half years ago, the question was, ‘Are you an ally?’ ... The question now is, ‘Why wouldn’t you be an ally?’

“Student government’s role in this respect, I think, is continually providing a support for that.”

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## ND SENATE

# Group focuses on sexual assault, inclusion

By **MARGARET HYND**  
News Writer

Student body vice president Nancy Joyce said she has been “very proud” of senate’s progress this year.

“My perception is that people, when they are here, and then when they are going to their department meetings, [are] very committed,” she said. “I’m very pleased with the way they’ve acted with each other, with me, and their dorms.”

Senate has already tackled some tough issues in the first half of the year, Joyce said, including resolutions on sexual assault and diversity.

“I’m really proud of the way they’ve handled these issues,” Joyce said. “They’ve done a good job of contributing different viewpoints and bringing different perspectives to the table.”

To address sexual assault on campus, Senate passed a resolution in mid-September in support of NDSP’s decision to change the wording of emails sent to the student body following sexual assault reports. Most noticeably, the term “sexual battery” replaced “forcible fondling.”

Although the official decision was made by NDSP, at the time, student body president Alex Coccia said, “[the resolution] shows our support of the fact that they asked for our input.”

In its last meeting before Thanksgiving, the group passed a resolution to support recommendations regarding inclusion on campus issued by the Diversity Council. A similar resolution had failed to pass a week earlier after a series of heated debates leading up to the vote.

“I think [those two] resolutions are the biggest ones to come out of Senate, not just because of what

the resolutions said, but because of the discussions we had,” Joyce said. “More than anything, I was really pleased with the fact that it seemed to me that senators were going back to their dorms and talking with [their constituents].”

Joyce said senate acts as a “great soundboard” for ideas to help determine how the student body might react to different things.

“I hope they view their role as one that comes with a lot of importance and weight because I take their opinions very seriously,” she said. “I hope they view their role as one that has a lot of influence over what happens in student government.”

“In general, I think that the senators can go underappreciated, so I’d like to say to anyone reading this article that they should go back to their dorms and thank them.”

Joyce said for the rest of the academic year, the group will deal with procedural issues and probably continue its conversations about diversity and sexual assault on campus.

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## GRADE: A-

*Senate has passed influential resolutions pertinent to the most important issues on campus this semester.*

## CAMPUS LIFE COUNCIL

# Board analyzes community, academic needs

By **CATHERINE OWERS**  
News Writer

Alex Coccia, student body president and chair of the Campus Life Council (CLC) said the organization brings together students and faculty for a wide range of different perspectives on campus.

“When we come together to discuss issues related to student life, I think it’s very important to have those varied perspectives,” he said.

This year, the council is organized into three task forces, Coccia said, in an effort to address comprehensive issues. The three groups focus on safety and health, community building and holistic student development, and they will draft reports of their findings next semester.

Coccia said the third task force

focuses on students’ overall growth and improvement especially outside the classroom.

This semester, the safety and health group initiated the prayer services following email alerts of sexual assault, Coccia said.

“Now that’s a small action step,” he said. “At the same time, we’re talking about sexual assault and alcohol culture on campus. One of the things we’ll be focusing on next semester is doing focus groups with students to really get a sense of what people look for in parties and in building healthy relationships, whether people understand the signs of alcohol poisoning, and what the potential barriers are to helping someone who is intoxicated if they need help.”

The community building task force is examining programming, Coccia said, and examining “where people find their primary community.”

“They’re going to look at dorms that have a high rate of rector turnover, and they’re going to look at the effect that that has had on dorms, in order to help make recommendations on rector recruiting,” he said. “They’ve also been looking at Mass attendance information to see how we can better serve people in that area, and with consistent presiders. Also, they’re working with Diversity

Council and the recommendations they’ve made recently.”

The third task force has examined potential improvements in academic areas, Coccia said.

“One of the things they’re looking at right now is office hours, what best practices for office hours are and ensuring students have a mentoring relationship with their faculty,” he said. “They’ve also been looking at class timing, to see if there are ways we can ensure that students aren’t getting out of labs at crazy hour of the night, so people can actually have time to work on their own and have extracurricular engagement, as well.”

The CLC works to “benchmark” the practices of peer institutions, Coccia said, as well as soliciting student feedback, in the process of making recommendations.

“It’s a very deliberate procedure, but it’s also good because it allows us to the time to have ongoing discussions, rather than just jumping in and saying ‘this is what I think we should do,’” he said. “We have the opportunity and the perspective to really challenge each other on various issues and make sure we’re going to make proper recommendations.”

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## GRADE: B

*CLC is primarily an advisory body, but it does not seem like they achieved many concrete goals this semester.*

## SMC SENATE

# Assembly adopts new structure

By **KELLY KONYA**  
Associate Saint Mary’s Editor

The Saint Mary’s Student Senate completed its third semester of meetings with high hopes for the spring, SGA vice president Maddy Martin said.

“I’m really proud of the new structure we formatted this year, because we added some new positions and also evened out the amount of senators per grade,” she said.

Martin said permanent attendees included representatives of each “big board” on campus, including the presidents of Student Diversity Board, Residence Hall Association and Student Activities Board. Senators elected from each class, officers of SGA and ordinary students also participated.

“[That] encouraged a town-hall setting,” Martin said. “Essentially, we are covering every corner of campus, and this is the only sort of collective meeting that accomplishes that.”

Senate added a new amendment to the SGA constitution, establishing guidelines for the group’s parliamentary order, Martin said.

“We are still in the midst of revising our constitution right now, because we realized many things in it that we are not using or we have something new that needs to be incorporated,” she said. “We hope the modified guidelines will encourage efficiency within the Senate and uphold the traditions set in the place by previous SGA officers.”

“Each board has been working to go through their part of the constitution, and so our final goal is to have the constitution revised and finalized by April’s turnover.”

This semester, senate also discussed the fiscal budget for the remainder of the school year, vice president of finance Emily Murphy said. Rachel Sinchak, a junior senator, said this financial evaluation was especially important for all of the big-board and class-board

members.

“It’s hard because the SGA budget isn’t able to allocate huge funds to every board, but Emily [Murphy] and the other officers really try their best to share the finances equally across the groups,” Sinchak said. “The goal of the senate is to be as beneficial to as many student groups as possible while also being cost-effective, and I think most of the decisions reached this year in the meetings reflected that principle.”

Another issue senate considered was the decision to host a dance with the Naval Academy following the Notre Dame-Navy football game Nov. 2. Though the dance was eventually approved, senate spent an entire meeting addressing whether or not the event would be advantageous for SGA’s overall budget, Martin said.

“I thought it was great for our senators to be able to see from start to finish how this sort of process works,” Martin said. “Our senators were surprised with how much involvement they had in decisions like this, as they were the ultimate deciding factor in events and their opinions truly mattered.”

Looking ahead to the spring, Martin said the senators have been encouraged to bring to the group ideas that may be forming in individual class meetings.

“We hope to continue to answer all unanswered questions on campus, like issues with technology or parking and so on,” Martin said. “I think the senate is most constructive because the senators who are pertinent to their respective classes come and raise questions that have been floating around campus.”

“This helps with our goal of transparency, as the girls can provide the answers to the rest of the student body after we have decided what will benefit the entire campus.”

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## GRADE: A-

*SMC senate has succeeded in finding a structure that makes it effective and incorporates voices from various boards on campus. The group has also formalized this organization for future administrations.*

# DEPARTMENT REVIEWS

The Observer evaluated every department within Notre Dame and Saint Mary's student governments to evaluate their level of achievement thus far in their terms.

The departments within Notre Dame student government are highlighted in dark blue and gold.

Our analyses of Saint Mary's boards are featured in light blue.

## Department of University Affairs

The Department of Academic Affairs met with administrators to discuss potential improvements to "DARTing" and PIN distribution. It continued its Last Lecture series, introduced a First Lectures series and teamed up with several University offices to bring TEDxUND to campus in January. It also created a study-space map, available on InsideND and mobileND. The department has many ambitious initiatives planned but has much to do in order to accomplish all of its goals by the end of the term.

**A-**

## Department of University Affairs

The Department of University Affairs increased the hours of access to DeBartolo Hall and worked with NDSP to repair emergency phones outside dorms. It partnered with Notre Dame Food Services to promote food sustainability. The department hopes to establish an easy and affordable transportation system for off-campus students and to implement a bike rental program. To improve from its B- ranking, the department will have to see more tangible results and must make significant progress.

**B-**

## Department of Constituent Services

The Department of Constituent Services executed town-hall discussions about the Office of Community Standards, mental health concerns and sexual violence. The department plans to host a conversation about Notre Dame Food Services. It developed the "One Is Too Many" campaign that seeks to combat sexual violence at a grassroots level. The Department is investigating increased movie-rental options and developing a community-improvement award to recognize students who serve South Bend.

**A**

## Department of Community Relations

The department coordinated the Northeast Neighborhood Welcome Back Picnic, uniting students and local residents to celebrate the beginning of the school year. The community summit facilitated goal sharing between local leaders and the University administration. The department also sponsored a bus tour to expose new students to entertainment spots and South Bend's history. They created committees of students from all higher education institutions in South Bend, connecting them with community leaders to learn about internship and entertainment opportunities. Through this, they expanded students' lives beyond campus and into South Bend, earning them the A.

**A**

## Department of Social Concerns

The department co-sponsored a day of service, sports and networking in Chicago with the varsity lacrosse team called Playing for Peace and also implemented the Serve ND website to aggregate all the on-campus service groups. In addition, the department orchestrated a prayer services and discussion in response to the crisis in Syria. They planned spring events including a benefit dinner for Syria, a local food campaign, another Playing for Peace event and a Social Action Network to facilitate collaboration among service groups at Notre Dame. These events and the ones in progress earned the department an A-.

**A-**

## Department of Campus Technology

The department successfully organized a mobile summit this semester and facilitated a Dorm Tech Liaison initiative to help students with technical difficulties in their dorms. However, they have a low grade because they failed to successfully improve policies on campus. They do have potentially significant projects in progress, such as upgrading the DART and printing systems, creating an updated mobile app and purchasing a new scanner for the Coleman-Morse Center. Each of these improvements would drastically enhance student life, but the department needs to make more headway.

**C+**

## Department of National Engagement & Outreach

This department devoted great attention this semester to benchmarking Notre Dame's policies regarding gender relations, financial programs, food services and museums with peer and aspirational universities, examining how such programs, policies and student outreach are structured at other schools. These efforts can show Notre Dame students the relevance and fairness of University policy, but the department has yet to endow its outreach work with great relevance for the student body. This department earns a B+ for its work.

**B+**

## Department of Residential Life

This department developed the first annual Irish State of Mind Week to raise awareness about mental health on campus, working with SMC and Holy Cross College. In addition, they are developing a formal proposal for open dining hall hours, a Grab and Go satellite and a swipes plan. Hopefully, they will fulfill their pledge to improve RecSports and student housing next semester. The Department deserves an A- for completing a number of very important issues affecting student life, and making progress on even more.

**A-**

## Department of Gender Issues

The Department of Gender Issues worked with NDSP to revise its sexual-assault alert emails — specifically, to change "forcible fondling" to "sexual battery" and to make the language more clearly supportive of victims. The department organized prayer services to follow alert emails and partnered with the Gender Relations Center to promote Sexual Violence Awareness Month. It will team up with PrismND to coordinate transgender awareness events in the spring and will continue to investigate the effects of updated dorm alarm policies.

**A**

## Department of Internal Affairs

The department successfully addressed technical problems regarding language in the Constitution but has not successfully completed initiatives that affect the wider student body. In fact, their ongoing projects also are fairly trivial — most address clarifications regarding the Senate or the Constitution. They competently take on behind-the-scenes work and small tasks, but they need to evaluate ways to work toward a larger-scale initiative that can impact student life or student government as a whole. Because of this, the department earned a B.

**B**

## SMC Residence Hall Association

Saint Mary's Residence Hall Association (RHA), part of the larger Council of Activities, had a productive fall semester. This year, RHA updated its constitution to create a "smaller and more dynamic" governing body, RHA president Kaitlyn Baker said. Because of these transitions and its work promoting events like its annual spirit week, Cookies and Coasters Freshmen Social, all-hall kickball tournament and hall directors' tea parties, the association deserves an A for its work.

**A**

## SMC Student Activities Board

This semester, the Saint Mary's Student Activities Board (SAB), part of the larger Council of Activities, worked with the Notre Dame, Holy Cross and greater South Bend communities to host Belles Bash, Turkey Bowl, Fall Break Rescue, Bella-Boo, Winter Wonderland and Study Day Massages. The club has hosted several successful events but should work on advertising their events more. Because of this, the board deserves an A-.

**A-**

## SMC Student Diversity Board

Saint Mary's Student Diversity Board (SDB), part of the larger Council of Activities, chose a theme of "Rethinking Leadership and Diversity." This semester, the board hosted more than 700 people at the S'more Diversity Bonfire and closed the semester with a Hunger Banquet. It will host its annual Diverse Students' Leadership Conference this March. The board deserves an A for its unique way of expressing diversity.

**A**

## SMC Council of Clubs

The Saint Mary's Council of Clubs, part of the larger Council of Activities, oversees the allocation of student government funds to various clubs and organizations on campus. This semester, the council used increased advertising to encourage students to take advantage of the money available to them via student government. The council deserves an A because this year, it gave out more sponsorships than ever before and went through its entire budgeted amount for on-campus events, as well as for travel grants.

**A**