

Politics on campus:

Personality clashes mar SGA image

by Timothy Jones
The Collegian

I know absolutely nothing about SGA," says 4th semester biology major Wendy Moyer. "I just know it's student government. When you go to an event, it's usually sponsored by SPC or JRC. I've never heard of anything done by SGA."

Diane Beck, 2nd semester business, shares those sentiments. "SGA helps plan events, but I don't really know what they actually do," she explains.

SGA consists of a president (David Mahoney), a vice president (Jason Bates), two treasurers (Mary Magestro and Steve Binder), a secretary (Gail Senoski) and a parliamentarian (Dan D'Ambrosio). Nine commuter senators, five resident senators, two freshmen senators and seven council presidents make up the rest of SGA.

The council presidents are the official representatives to SGA for their respective organizations and are governed by the constitutions of their specified groups. Each commuter and resident senator represents the interests and opinions of their respective students at the meetings of SGA and helps communicate student government issues and activities to the students they represent.

Resident senator Brian Biddle says, "Residents, except for people who know me, have not come up to me, but people do try and get a hold of me."

"In Niagara Hall," he explains, "the roof was being repaired and there was a terrible smell. Some of the residents came to me and explained their concerns with the asphalt smell."

Freshman senators represent the interests and opinions of their respective class at the meetings of SGA.

The members of the Executive Board have their own duties and responsibilities.

Some of the president's additional tasks include calling and presiding over all SGA meetings, being empowered to represent the student body in discussions or negotiations with the administration, faculty, and staff of the College and University, and representing the student body on ceremonial occasions.

The vice president assists the president in planning,

coordinating, and nurturing the organization's activities and serves as chairperson for the Traffic Appeals Board.

The two treasurers maintain the financial accounts for all registered student clubs and organizations and are responsible for strict operation of SGA budget in accordance with University policy as prescribed by student senate.

The secretary is responsible for the accurate recording of the minutes of SGA meetings and assists the president on the general operations of the SGA office. The parliamentarian is responsible for ensuring appropriate conduct at Student Senate meetings.

In spite of student criticisms, vice-president Jason Bates believes SGA has done a great deal for the campus this year.

"We passed constitutions that SOC (Student Organization Council) brings to our attention. The Chess, History and Monty Python clubs constitutions have just been passed. There is a Budget Committee that allocates the money that organizations get."

"There is a Traffic Appeals Board where the members get together and hear complaints." Most of those complaints involve traffic violations and citations, he adds.

"Our services also contained 'All-U-Day', a spring break trip, and an Erindale trip to Canada," Bates says.

The trip to Erindale, Behrend's

"SGA hasn't done a thing this year. Why is a good question. We have dead-weight and people who don't show up."

- Mark Johnson
SPC President

"sister-school" within the University of Toronto, has drawn fire from several critics who felt the activity was merely "a party for people who went on the trip," according to Bates.

Paula Holabaugh, who was in charge of the Erindale expedition, stresses that the trip was educational and not a party, and that those involved were able to meet with different students and share American/Canadian ideas.

Other problems have continued to plague SGA this year, however. The inner fighting between members, the "petty issues," as some put it, and the absence of a secretary last



Greg Geibel/*The Collegian*

Keeping Busy: Eric Pine, one of two Freshmen Senators, fields a telephone call in the SGA office. In spite of the hectic office environment, many students question the effectiveness of the current SGA system.

semester have made it a less than stellar year for SGA.

The members are divided over how SGA has been this year.

"Everyone is doing their job, commuter senator Joe Mycka says. "Sometimes you hit a spot where you go into a slump and raise up again. Hopefully we won't all slump at once. I believe SGA is doing well and things are picking up."

Others are less optimistic.

Plus we've spent time on trivial issues."

Steve Fuller, SOC president, also mentions the obstacle of low student involvement.

"SGA is there for the campus. It's been sort of crazy and disorganized, but we are starting to come together and we are getting it to work right. Students need to come to us and let us know what it is we can do for them. We haven't had a lot of

the possibility of installing telephones near the tennis courts.

Many SGA members believe these problems are in the past, however.

"With all of this behind us, we can accomplish something great. We have many goals and it would be great if we sat down and accomplished one," says SPC President Johnson.

Those goals include: 1.) increasing student awareness and enrollment in SGA and other organizations by enhancing the Student Activities Fair; 2.) promoting school spirit through Spirit Week, pep rallies, and College Video Tape programming; and 3.) improving weekend social activities by boosting intramurals and Bruno's programming.

In addition, members hope to generate interest in SGA by planning for elections in advance and maintaining an election committee throughout the year.

If steps like these are taken, Vice President Bates predicts a brighter future for SGA.

"SGA hasn't been productive, but the wheels are greased and we are finally ready to go."

Timothy Jones, a 4th semester English major, is a regular theater critic for The Collegian's Entertainment section.

student input."

Another reason people believe SGA has not been effective has been the choice of issues that are covered.

Lori Royer, SOC vice president, says, "This year SGA had a highly self-motivated group of people. Unfortunately, the leadership dragged out certain issues after Senate voted on them and a lot of positive things that SGA, SOC, and other organizations accomplished were overshadowed by a few negative issues."

Negative issues included a drawn-out argument concerning access to the SGA computer and

Don't have time to keep up with all the national papers?

Check out our news Wire for the latest from the "real world." -- Page 3