



YEAR IN REVIEW

Student Government UNIVERSITY of NOTRE DAME

Back in February 2020, we were elected on a promise to accompany and advocate for all students and to amplify their voices.

Just a few weeks later, in the now notorious month of March 2020, Notre Dame brought all students home from study abroad, asked all students living on campus to not return following spring break, and the world as we knew it changed.

When we ran for office, we had great ambitions and a vivid vision for improving life on campus—plans to reverse the restrictive dorm access policy, create partnerships with ride-sharing platforms for students, and enact large-scale campus programming surrounding events such as the scheduled 2020 Presidential Debate. However, we were soon attending classes virtually, each of us pinpointing a different spot on a global map, and our hopes and dreams for our life in community here at Notre Dame began to feel obsolete.

We quickly realized that leadership is not about what *you want*; rather, it is about what *your community needs*. Within our first week in office, we pivoted to advocating for the University to house international students who could no longer leave the country, to provide students without reliable internet connection a prepaid hotspot to get them through a semester of Zoom classes, and to support students whose basic needs were not met in their typical home environments. While we had to jettison a lot of our initial plans, we adopted a mindset of flexibility and resilience early on, which has proven to be a blessing.

Although our time in office has been nothing like we anticipated, the opportunity that you all gave us to serve in these offices has given us more than we could have imagined. We count all the conversations that we have been able to have with students on a daily basis as blessings, and we have been deeply moved by the vulnerability, strength, and courage that many of you have demonstrated when sharing your stories. Over the course of our term, we have learned from passionate club representatives who strive to make Notre Dame more accessible and welcoming, dedicated public servants who give of themselves to community efforts and partnerships, and student leaders who provide rallying cries to their constituencies at a moment's notice.

Our community has energized us throughout this entire journey, and we have been especially grateful for the hard work of our Executive Cabinet members as they made great strides in the name of justice and progress. Thanks to an inimitable team of brilliant minds and bold hearts, we were able to stand with survivors of sexual assault by influencing Notre Dame's new Title IX policies and procedures, provide anti-racism programming through Race Relations Week, attend to student mental health by successfully advocating for break days during the spring semester and providing care packages to students in Q&I, prioritize sustainability in the dining halls by distributing reusable cutlery, enhance structural representation by working with student leaders to elevate the status of Diversity Council and PrismND on campus bodies, and foster civic engagement and voter education. Every day, we were inspired by their unbridled optimism for what Notre Dame could be and their dedication to see that vision through despite the unique challenges that this year presented.



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As our term concludes and we approach a time of reflection, we know that we will have the chance to unpack this rollercoaster of a ride further and reflect on our moments of pride, as well as what we could have done differently. Although imperfect, we hope you know that we genuinely gave this public service our all.

We will welcome this opportunity for retrospection, extremely comforted by the full faith we have that our successors will be dedicated servant leaders for the student body. Allan, Matthew, and Alix have a sense of compassion that permeates all they do, and we know them each to be great forces for good. We are excited to support them from the sidelines and celebrate their victories.

Additionally, we are heartened by the wonderful news that on campus vaccination for students will begin tomorrow. Through our service on the Student Advisory Group for Campus Reopening, we have been involved in important discussions regarding the restoration of certain aspects of our communal life if 90% of our student body makes the decision to protect themselves and our community by getting vaccinated. We highly encourage you all to take this opportunity for the good of our community, and especially for the most vulnerable members within it.

History certainly has had its eyes on us over this past year, and as we begin to take the first steps towards a new normal, let us remember the most important lessons that we have learned from this time: lessons to be more compassionate in our daily interactions with one another, and lessons to put the common good at the forefront of everything we do. The light at the end of the tunnel draws nearer with each passing day, and we look forward to a full reunion with our beloved community at the end of it.

But most importantly, we want to thank you all for the opportunity and honor of serving you in what has been quite the unprecedented time. You have been generous with your perspectives and abundant with your kindness, and the grace that you showed us as we embarked on a learning curve did not go unnoticed. Throughout the whirlwind of it all, you helped us stay grounded in why we were HERE. There is no student body we could have been more proud to represent.

Keep fighting the good fight.

In Notre Dame,

Rachel Ingal,
2020-2021 Student Body President

Sarah Galbenski,
2020-2021 Student Body Vice President

Aaron Benavides,
2020-2021 Student Government Chief of Staff





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AMPLIFY

DAY OF ACTION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Drafted a [statement](#) explaining why ICE's July 6th revocation of protection for students on F-1 and M-1 visas was xenophobic and harmful; posted a [Google form](#) pledge for students to sign to commit to different avenues of advocacy; compiled an [Action Guide](#) full of email/phone call templates, legislators to contact, and petitions to sign. Nearly 500 students committed to some kind of action in support of ND's international student community.

ELEVATING DIVERSITY COUNCIL

Worked with the Diversity Council Executive Board to write new DC bylaws and pass a Senate [order](#) to amend the Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Body to establish Diversity Council as a special interest organization. These two key institutional changes implement structures that amplify the voices of traditionally marginalized and underrepresented students by creating an effective forum to keep them in communication with the administration.

MENTAL HEALTH DAYS

Sent out a survey to the student body regarding mental health on campus during the fall semester. We received nearly 1,000 responses, and we used data visualization tools to package the data in order to effectively amplify student concerns. We presented this data to the Provost's Office and successfully advocated for mental health days this semester.

MOREAU VOTER ENGAGEMENT MODULE

Added a comprehensive Voter Engagement module to the Moreau First-Year Experience course so that incoming students each year will be educated on how to use their voice through their vote.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WEEK

Hosted a [Civic Engagement Week](#) including a College Democrats v. College Republicans mock presidential debate and Rock the Vote Festival featuring music, catered food, ice cream, lawn games, a voter registration drive, registration opportunities for various political clubs, and speeches on the importance of voter engagement.

TOWN HALL ON TRUST

Hosted a [Town Hall on Trust with Pete Buttigieg](#), allowing students to ask questions on the importance of trust in democracy. 100 students were able to attend in person and 3,200 attendees tuned into the livestream.

RESTRUCTURING THE CAMPUS LIFE COUNCIL (CLC)

Created new bylaws for the CLC to allow membership to be more representative of marginalized voices on campus. Created spots for Diversity Council, PrismND, and a designee of the Student Body President. The creation of structural representation was [passed by the Student Senate](#) and is designed to amplify more student voices.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH STUDENT CLUBS

Contributed to student club and organization led events, contributing over \$13,000 to their programming designed to improve the campus community.

VIRTUAL TOWN HALL WITH ERIN HOFFMANN HARDING

Fielded nearly 500 questions this summer regarding COVID prompted policy changes and consolidated the questions into a comprehensive list for Erin Hoffmann Harding to answer in a [virtual town hall](#). 1,300 students were able to tune in virtually.

NEW WEBSITE

Designed and implemented a [new website](#) so that students can better access student government information on initiatives and programming. The website includes an organizational flow chart that allows students to understand how to map decision makers at Notre Dame and who to contact for their efforts.



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ADVOCATE

RACE RELATIONS WEEK

Organized [Race Relations Week](#), a week-long effort to foster meaningful dialogue about race in all of its facets. The lineup of events included: a talk with a local member of the Pokagon band of the Potawatomi tribe on *Indigenous People's Day*; a conversation with *Angela Davis*; a presentation on *Racial Battle Fatigue*; a conversation on *Black Liberation*; a *Dismantling Racism Resource Fair*; and a culminating *Prayer for Unity* at the Grotto.

TITLE IX POLICY

Researched literature and statistics related to evidentiary standards with University sexual assault and harassment response proceedings and used our findings to advocate for the maintenance of the “preponderance of evidence” standard at Notre Dame via a presentation to the Faculty Senate and a [resolution](#) in support of upholding the preponderance of evidence standard in Title IX and other sex-based misconduct cases within the Student Senate.

FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

Partnered with Building Services to expand an existing initiative to offer free menstrual products within campus buildings, including the Duncan Student Center, the LaFortune Student Center, and DeBartolo Hall.

CALM APP

Spearheaded conversation with the Emotional Support and Well-Being Working Group to advocate for and secure a [premium Calm app subscription](#) for the entire ND community.

COVID AMNESTY POLICY

Engaged in dialogue with the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) about student concerns regarding possible deterrence from reporting cases of sexual assault and harassment due to fear of behavioral repercussions for COVID guideline infractions. This conversation resulted in OIE introducing formal [COVID-related amnesty language](#).

NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION

Uplifted Native American students' voices on campus by working to create an outline for a potential Native American Studies minor/concentration, as well as passing a [resolution to integrate Native American history into the Moreau curriculum](#).

MSPS TRAINING

Collaborated with the co-chairs of Hall Presidents Council to incorporate the hall's diversity and inclusion efforts into the 5% discretionary section for the Hall of the Year point system.

DASHBOARD METRICS AND INCREASED TESTING

Successfully advocated for more data and transparency on the [Notre Dame COVID-19 Dashboard](#), including the distinction between active and recovered cases and the distinction between undergraduate/graduate/employee cases. Through our roles on the Student Advisory Group for Campus Reopening, we also advocated for more frequent and regular testing, resulting in increased surveillance testing in the Spring semester.

STATEMENT ON RACIAL JUSTICE AND THE MURDER OF GEORGE FLOYD

Mobilized **over 2,200 students** to sign onto our [statement](#) regarding racial justice and the importance of a commitment to anti-racism.

ALLERGY ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE DINING HALL

Improved dining accommodations for students with mild and severe allergies and dietary restrictions by advocating for Campus Dining employee training and working with the Nutritional Counseling team to create a new introduction to dining accommodations including a [welcome graphic for incoming students](#) and an [informational guide for current students](#).



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ACCOMPANY

THE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP FORUM

Created a [Presidential Initiative](#) to connect Student Union leaders who identify as women and introduce them to women leaders at the University. At each forum, a keynote speaker shared her leadership journey and some words of wisdom, and student leaders facilitated small discussion groups to promote dialogue and relationship building.

REUSABLE CUTLERY GIVEAWAY

Listened to students' concerns about the amount waste generated in dining halls and took action by voicing their concerns to Campus Dining. At the beginning of the semester, we [distributed 500 sets of reusable cutlery](#) to students on campus and continued sustainability conversations with Campus Dining, leading to the removal of plastic bags from the dining halls. We helped package and distribute two sets of reusable cutlery to each student on campus.

Q&I CARE PACKAGES

Compiled over 500 care packages to be delivered to students entering quarantine and isolation.

TITLE IX TOWN HALL

Cultivated a relationship with the Office of Institutional Equity, working to better understand both national and University-level changes to sexual assault and harassment policies and procedures. We hosted a [town hall](#) to communicate these changes to students and clarify other aspects of Title IX.

FUEL MENTORSHIP GUIDE

Reached out to every member of the outgoing and incoming Executive Cabinet, Senate, and Hall Presidents Council as well as senior leaders in the Club Coordination Council, Diversity Council, Class Councils, and SUB (total of about 290 student leaders) in order to garner advice for incoming student leaders in the First Undergraduate Experience in Leadership (FUEL). We then created a directory for dispersion to FUELers, and the FUELers were able to connect with the campus leaders with whom they most identified.

MAJORS NIGHT

Adapted our typical Majors Night by working with First Year Advising to convert the event to a virtual format due to COVID-19. On an online platform, we were able to expand the event by featuring more academic programs than would typically fit in an in-person setting. Despite the pandemic, we were still able to create an opportunity for students to discern their academic paths.

(ONGOING) COLLABORATION WITH LGBTQ+ DOMERS

Working with new student group [LGBTQ+ Domers](#) to promote their book project to catalogue the history and narratives of Notre Dame's LGBTQ+ community.

UNITED WAY PARTNERSHIP

Established a framework for future student body involvement with United Way, a national non-profit. This non-profit is multifaceted, with many initiatives and opportunities that students will be able to participate in once the challenges of the pandemic are over.

NEW TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Coordinated and expanded a new University-sponsored nonstop bus system to and from the Chicago airports (MDW and ORD) to replace the old CoachUSA system.

9/11 MEMORIAL PRAYER SERVICE

Hosted the annual 9/11 Memorial Prayer Service in-person at the Grotto and due to COVID-19, [live-streamed the event](#) to accommodate more than 900 viewers.



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SPECIAL THANKS

The accomplishments of the past year would not have been possible without our counterparts across the Student Union and our phenomenal Executive Cabinet Directors and department members. In particular we want to thank:

Katherine Relick
Student Union Secretary

Ameena Jovonovich
Executive Controller

Lauryn Pugh
Director of Academic Affairs

Jack Stump
Director of Athletics

Michael Prieto
Director of Campus Technology and Innovation

Chris Russo
Press Secretary and Director of Communications

Tommy Han
Director of Community Engagement and Outreach

Kaya Lawrence
Director of Diversity and Inclusion

Sabrina Curran
Director of Faith and Service

Meredith Wilson
Director of Gender Relations

Grace Dean
Director of Health and Well-Being

Riya Shah
Director of National Engagement

Abu Mian
Director of Social Concerns

Meilin Scanish
Director of Student Empowerment

Ian Baker
Co-Director of Student Life

Isabel Edgar
Co-Director of Student Life

Dana Plagenz
Director of Sustainability

Abby Wolfe
Director of University Policy

Kevin Gallagher
Co-Director of FUEL

Fritz Schemel
Co-Director of FUEL