

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME DU LAC  
STUDENT SENATE  
Executive Summary  
September 10, 2014

I. Opening Business

- A. Matt Devine called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.
- B. Kevin Coleman led the invocation.
- C. 2 were absent; 1 was late.
- D. Kevin C. moved to amend last week's minutes.
  - i. Minutes were amended to correct the spelling of Michael Wajda's name.
  - ii. Kevin C. moved to approve the amended minutes. Scott Moore seconded.
  - iii. Minutes approved.

II. Officer Announcements

- A. Lauren Vidal, Student Body President
  - i. Updates were tabled by Matt, as Lauren will be delivering the State of the Union Address at today's Senate.
- B. Matthew Devine, Student Body Vice President
  - i. No announcements.
- C. Shannon Montague, Chief of Staff
  - i. On behalf of Elizabeth Fenton, Director of National Engagement and Outreach, Shannon announced that Political Brew will be held this Sunday at 11:00am in the McNeill Room in Lafortune.
  - ii. There will be an Executive Programming Board Meeting at the end of this month.

III. Approvals

- A. Judicial Council Election Committee, *Judicial Council President Kathryn Peruski*
  - i. Kathryn read brief bios and gave her full endorsement to each of the seven nominees.
  - ii. There were no objections to a blanket approval
  - iii. Kevin C. moved to vote. Kevin Bond seconded.
  - iv. Rebecca Blais, Adam Conrath, Erica Hilliard, Hayley May, Anthony Mendoza, Amit Paul, and Kevin Weaver were approved to serve on the Election Committee for the 2014-2015 academic year by unanimous voice vote.

IV. General Orders

- A. State of the Union, *Student Body President Lauren Vidal*
  - i. The State of the Union Address went as follows:

“Welcome to the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, and to the beginning of your fall term as representatives for your peers on Student Senate. Our year will continue to focus on the need to address issues that are relevant to our students and to our campus. I stand here today proud to work with each and every one of you in an effort to build upon



the sense of community, the sense of pride, and the sense of responsibility we all share as Notre Dame students.

We enter this year with much rigor and anticipation for what is to come. I sense the energy in this room and the truly good intentions of each and every one of you. I believe that we have an opportunity to make changes and address pressing issues, ultimately finding long lasting solutions on campus. I am proud of the work we have done thus far but I look forward to the year we have ahead.

I ask that each of you take a few moments today and this week to really get a grasp on what you would like to accomplish. You must each understand that as students and student leaders you are all catalysts for positive change in our world. We must all set our sights on the possibilities that lay before us, and then we must look ahead. We must look to a time where we have all already graduated, and we must think about how some of our actions today and this year can improve the student experience for years to come.

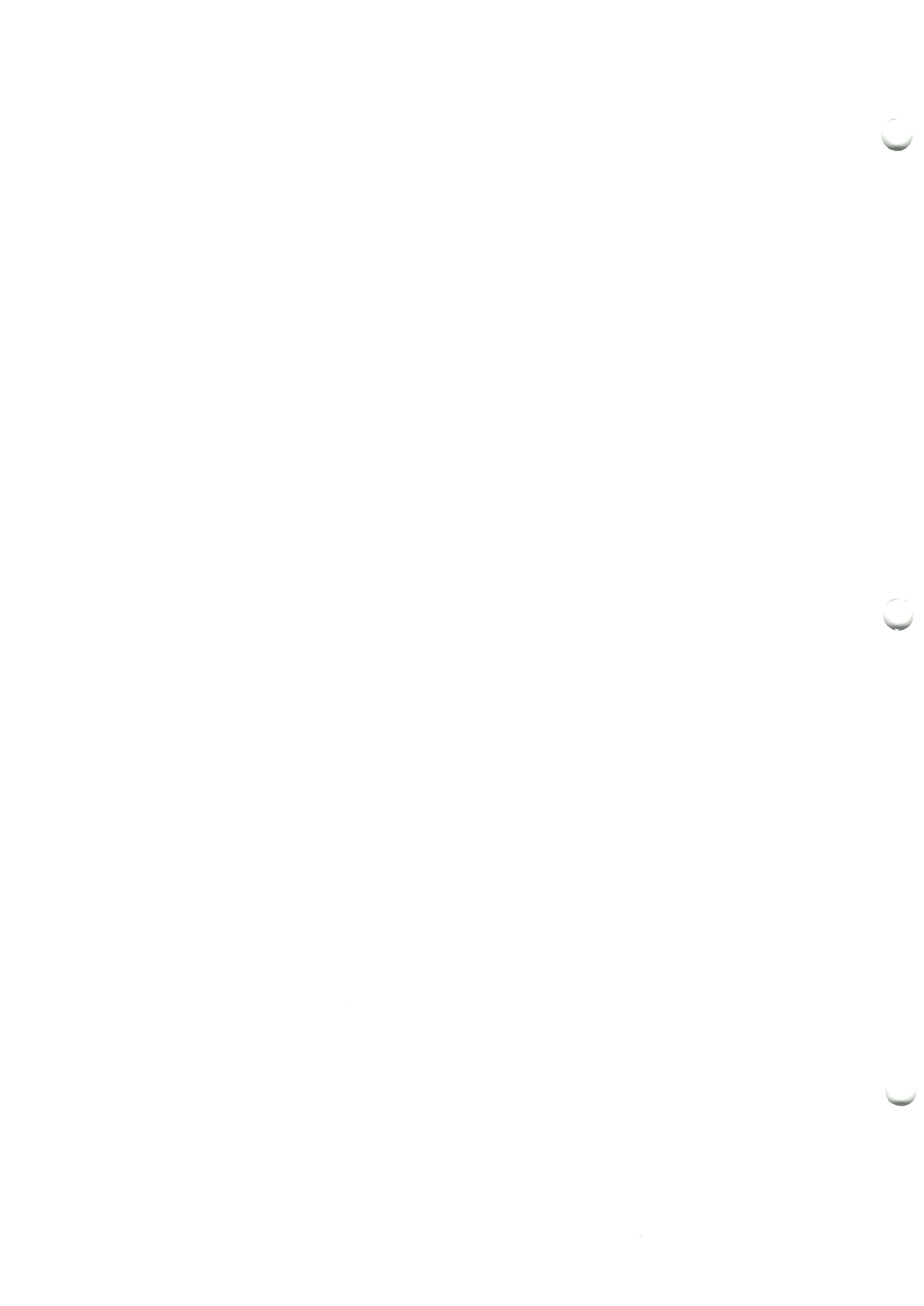
I am extremely proud of the work we have already accomplished in only our first few meetings. We have discussed and debated the readership program. Our discussion led an active search for other readership options and spurred our conversations to improve the program. We took all of the feedback from senate and we applied it to our efforts in order to make a tangible change on our campus. In our first few weeks, we also addressed the issue of safety on campus and tackled it head-on. We extended the conversation about sexual assault, and we brainstormed tangible methods for reducing incidences on our campus, while focusing on improving overall safety. Upon passing a resolution to look at a possible revision of the Safe Walk program, we took to action and put 2 state of the art vehicles on patrol. I have received report from NDSP that the O'SNAP program is running very smoothly and effectively. As a senate committee we have also addressed issues with the funding of "The Shirt Project," and have participated in the revitalization of the funding structure in order to create more opportunities for students who utilize the rector funds on our campus.

What an honor to have been able to make some of these changes in only a few short weeks, alongside such bright and determined leaders. May we remember the power of a group of thoughtful and committed citizens, and may we never forget how privileged we are to sit in this room each Wednesday to discuss the state of both our amazing University and our even more outstanding peers. Let us continue to be advocates for our students and may we always remember that we are here for one another, to support one another, and to come together to bridge efforts, form lasting bonds, and strengthen each other's lives and the lives of those around us. I look forward to the year of work ahead and am excited to see what we can do as a group. Thank you for giving this position your all and for always showing commitment to our peers. God Bless and Go Irish!"

## B. Discussion Re: University Auditing Policy

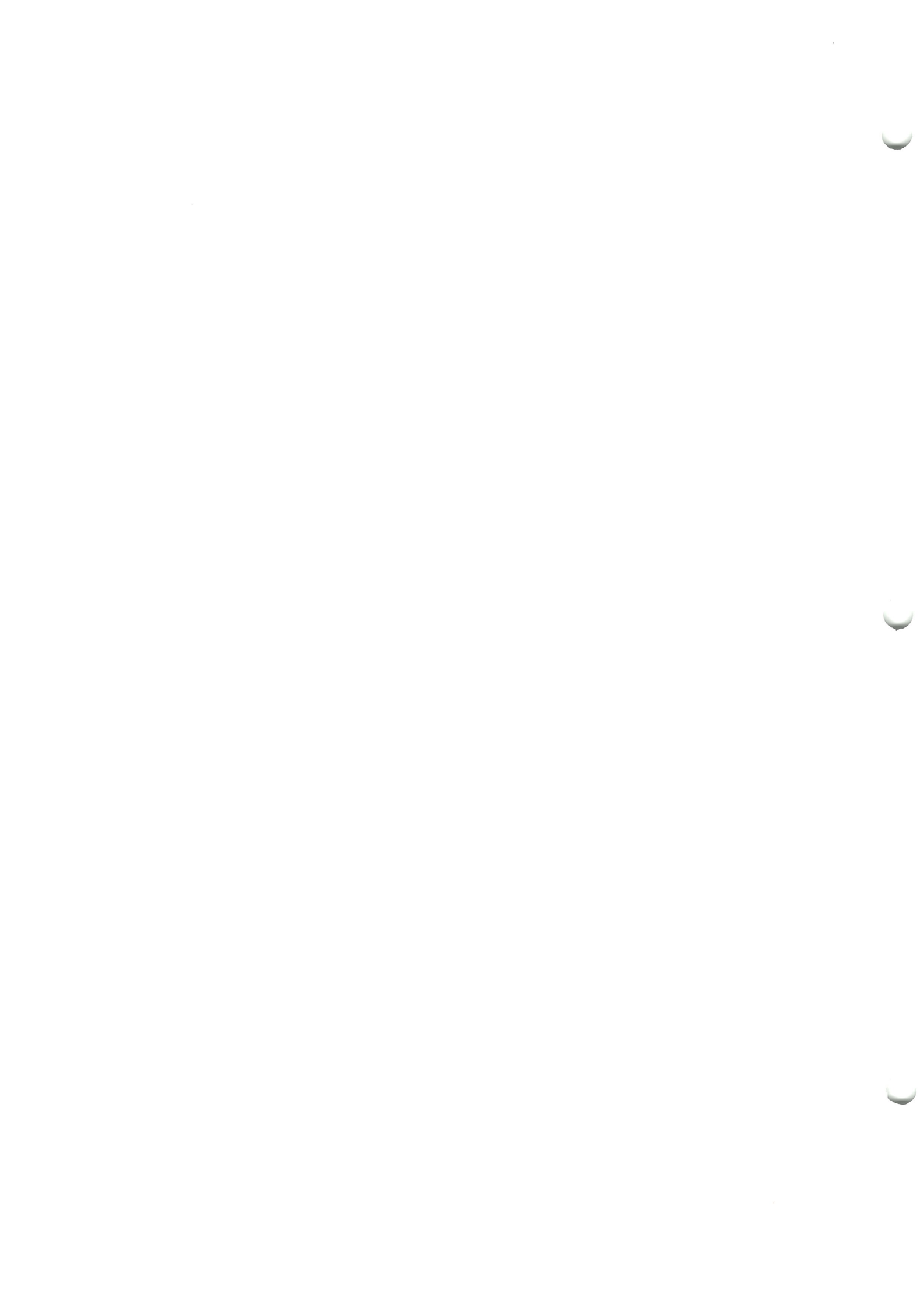
### i. Official Policy Description

1. Only graduate students are permitted to audit classes. Audited classes are non-credit bearing. Graduate students may sign up to audit a class via the University Registrar by the sixth class day.



2. Auditing is defined as sitting in on a class, whether once or throughout the semester, without being officially registered. This is not allowed for undergraduate students.
  3. The Registrar has said that there are typically 100 undergraduate students each semester who ask to audit classes. The blanket policy of the Registrar's Office is to deny these requests.
- ii. FOCUS: Feedback about the current arrangement. Is this an actionable item?
1. Jimmy McEntee pointed out that in many classes, there are no more physical seats available in the classroom.
    - a. Matt responded that Faculty Senate has said that the potentially new audit policy would be class-specific.
  2. Brian Cimons believes amending the auditing policy is a good idea. Allowing students to audit classes does not cost the University any additional money. Auditing classes is a great way for students to learn new skills without being tested or getting a grade. He suggested opening up audit seats through the DART system.
  3. Ashley Calvani agrees that allowing undergraduates to audit classes is a good idea as long as the room is not overcrowded and the auditing students do not interfere with normal classes.
  4. Kathryn brought personal perspective as a senior applying to graduate school. It would be great to have additional classes on your transcript, especially specialized classes or classes outside your major.
  5. Kevin C. does not believe auditing spots should be available through DART. Each student should have to go to the Registrar's Office to apply for an audit spot through a lottery system.
  6. Grant Humphreys brought up a concern about auditing small classes. Small class sizes are beneficial to the students officially registered for them and having additional students who do not care enough to take the class for a grade could interfere.
  7. Matt brought up that Faculty Senate is concerned that students will either not take audited classes seriously or that they will be even more stressed due to an increased load.
  8. Kristen Parkinson noted that some students audit classes that they would not otherwise be able to take due to major or prerequisite attribute restrictions.
  9. Elle Steichen asked for clarification about credit hours for audited classes.
    - a. Since the official policy is currently against all auditing, there are no official rules about this yet.
  10. Elena Silla asked about auditing small seminar-style classes.
    - a. The auditing policy will likely be class-specific, but since there is no official approved auditing currently, these specifications have yet to be determined.
  11. Matt opened the floor to an informal vote.
    - a. By a show of hands, 28 were in favor of Faculty Senate pursuing a change in the audit policy. 5 were opposed.

C. Discussion Re: Mental Health Resources



- i. Lauren, Matt and Shannon will be presenting to the Board of Trustees in October about mental health on campus and student stress levels.
- ii. Discussion of mental health resources on campus: helpfulness, awareness, and stigma of using them.
  1. Brian Mukhaya said that the University Health Services website is out of date. Many of his peers have not heard of the programs offered.
  2. Kathryn believes there is a large stigma associated with mental health resources. Students are often ashamed of visiting the Counseling Center.
  3. Kristen Gates noted that physical illnesses are quickly addressed by rectors and friends, but people stay quiet about mental illnesses. Even if they are aware of resources on campus, they are slow to act because they do not think it will help.
  4. Jimmy said some students do not know how to address issues of sexual assault on campus and are unsure of who to go to for help.
  5. Helen Hathaway brought up the crisis numbers on the website. Those phone numbers should be more widely publicized because someone in the midst of a crisis is not going to look to the website to find the number to call.
  6. Katie Arndorfer spoke about the Let's Talk Program. A lot of girls in Ryan Hall know what the program is, but are hesitant to go because they do not know who will be on the other side of the conversation. Being able to put faces with the counselors could help.
  7. Chris DeSapio said that students who are stressed typically talk to their friends or hall staff rather than reaching out to the Counseling Center. He brought up an idea to strengthen the counseling resources available in the dorms.
  8. Michael Wajda asked about the rebranding of the Center for the Student Health Promotion and Wellbeing. He also asked about the success of the current Counseling Center programs.
    - a. Lauren and Matt have a meeting with Brian Stackman and the new Director of the University Health Center, so they will find out.
  9. Kathryn agreed with Chris that students who are stressed typically go to people in their dorms. However, off-campus students no longer have that network.
    - a. Lauren said that they will be holding focus groups to look at stress levels of students who are very involved in extracurriculars vs. focused mainly on academics and who live on vs. off-campus.
  10. Kevin C. noticed that most UCC advertisements do not focus on individual therapy, but rather on group sessions. Advertising individual sessions may be more tailored to student needs.
    - a. Marissa Taylor said that before group sessions, you must go through an individual screening. After that screening, the UCC will decide if individual or group sessions are best for you.
  11. Grant brought up the idea of expanding the "Safe Space" stickers to people you can talk to if you feel stressed.





12. Helen believes that stressed students find solidarity with other stressed students. It can be intimidating to talk to someone who has everything under control.
  13. Molly Burke said that the UCC being associated with St. Liam's can be a turn-off because it makes you seem "sick." It takes a while for students to get comfortable going to counseling at St. Liam's. She agreed that counseling in the dorms would be a more comfortable environment.
  14. Elle S. noted that many Notre Dame students are very driven people with Type A personalities. She asked Lauren and Matt about the prevalence of mental illness on campus and the types of mental illness that are most prevalent.
    - a. Although they do not have exact number yet, Matt responded that mental illness is prevalent enough on campus to have caught the attention of the Board of Trustees.
  15. Jimmy asked about successful Counseling Programs at other universities.
    - a. Lauren responded that the new Director of the UCC comes from the University of Pennsylvania, which seems to have a good model.
  16. Kevin C. noted that the website advertises short-term programs rather than long-term solutions.
  17. Scott Moore would like to see greater attention drawn to the effects of social media on mental illness. Depression and social media have been shown to be correlated. He suggested training students to detect depression in their peers through social media.
    - a. Elle S. supports Scott's idea to train students to notice symptoms of depression in their peers.
    - b. Michael was part of a test group at the UCC last year that looked into training students to notice the symptoms of mental illness.
  18. Ashley reminded everyone that it is important for us as student leaders to keep an eye on the students in our dorms. Upperclassmen taking an interest in freshmen's lives can make a huge difference.
- iii. Discussion of the causes of stress and mental illness on campus
1. Matt asked if students are aware of their stress levels.
    - a. Chris responded that students are often aware of their stress levels at the time, but do not necessarily recognize the impact.
  2. Shannon asked if students think that stress is just a given at a university of this caliber.
    - a. Kevin B. answered in the affirmative. Students sometimes do not realize how stressed they are until it is too late.
    - b. Ryan Rizzuto said that most students see spending all day studying and skipping meals during finals week as part of the process.
    - c. Kristen G. said there is a lot of pressure on Notre Dame students to be really involved. In addition, some majors are more demanding than others and students think that since upperclassmen have gone through it before, they just need to keep pushing through.
    - d. Elle S. made the point that it is difficult to know at what point to seek help.



- e. Kathryn said that sometimes you know you are stressed and you need to talk about it, but your friends are just as stressed, so you don't know where else to look for help.
- 3. Lauren asked a series of questions and asked for a show of hands:
  - a. Do you feel like you are in competition with your classmates? Is that a source of stress?
  - b. Do you feel pressure for perfection at Notre Dame?
  - c. Do you sometimes feel alone in your worries?
  - d. Do you ever go home for a break, sit down at dinner with your parents, and remember that there is more to life than school and exams?
- 4. Elle Huang noted that one of her biggest stressors is attending meetings. One thing that helps her is organizing her time, especially through Google calendars.
- 5. Scott M. reminded everyone to be sensitive of their classmates' needs. Everyone is good at putting up a façade, but you never know what people are really dealing with.
- 6. Jimmy brought up a 1-credit class he took freshman year called Foundations of Academic Excellence. He had an assignment to fill out a Google calendar with every minute of his time scheduled, including sleep. He suggested that this be incorporated into the new PE curriculum.
- 7. Tom Taylor believes there should definitely be an outlet for people to talk about their concerns and stresses, especially for guys.

## V. New Business

A. Ashley asked about the money for textbooks being moved from the Rector Fund to the Office of Financial Aid.

- i. Kristen P. answered that she does not have control over this money. She was not aware of this change, but she will look into it.

B. Printing Quota Updates

- i. Matt said that he is aware of the general sentiment among students. Shuyang Li, Director of Campus Technology, is speaking with OIT about this.
- ii. Professors can increase students' print quota, but that money comes out of their department FOAPAL accounts.
- iii. Shannon announced that the point system has changed slightly to reduce the price per page from 4 points to 2 points.
- iv. Kevin C. asked about student input in the decision to change the print quota policy.
  - 1. Zach Waterson said that he was the single student in the focus group last year.

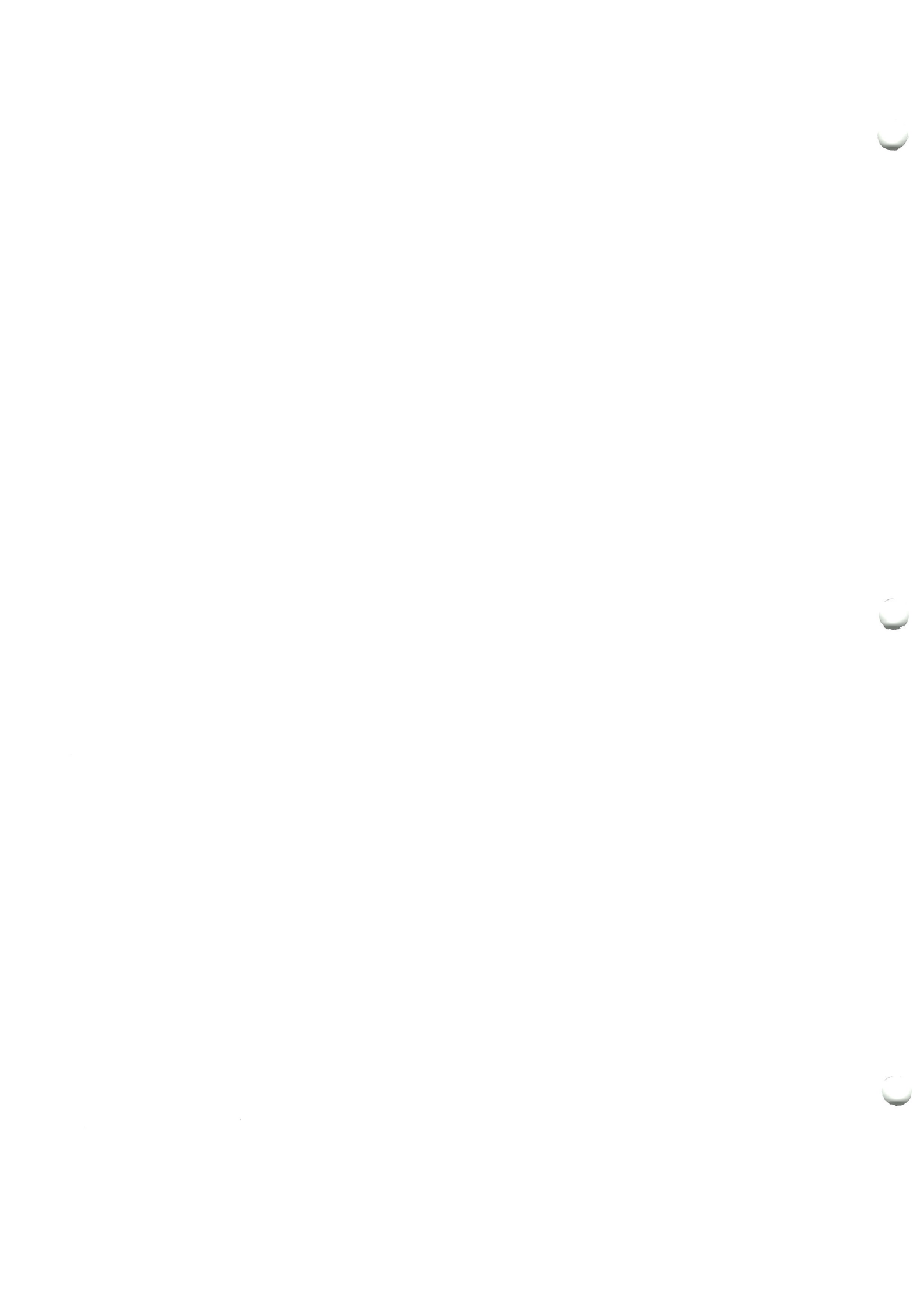
C. Brian C. asked about the policy to prevent cabs from lining up around Main Circle.

- i. Lauren said the conversation regarding that policy began last year.
- ii. Kevin C. said that over the past two years, he has seen signs at Main Circle to prevent cabs from waiting there.

D. Brian M. asked about College Readership in Hesburgh Library and the Law Library.

- i. Lauren answered that since the program is funded by Student Government, the papers are there primarily for undergraduate students.

## VI. Announcements



- A. Ashley announced Senate Dinner at South Dining Hall tonight.
- B. The Keough Chariot Race is on September 20. In the next week, there will be representatives from Keough at each dorm's Hall Council meeting to advertise.
- C. There are 227 days until the Fisher Regatta.
- D. Freshman Class Council elections are next Monday. Campaigning begins tomorrow.
- E. Hall President's Council has been working with the Thanking Father Ted Foundation to distribute books.
- F. Stanford Hall Rave for the Brave will be Friday, September 26 in Stepan Center.
- G. SUB weekly movies start tomorrow night in Debartolo 101. This weekend's movie is *Captain America*.
- H. The Student Safety Summit is September 16 from 5-6pm. This is required for all Senators. Please let Katie know if you are unable to make it.
- I. Lauren reminded everyone that she and the rest of the seniors in the room are here as friends and resources if you need anything.

VII. Adjournment

- A. Kevin C. motioned to adjourn.
- B. Grant seconded.
- C. Meeting adjourned at 7:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine L. Wood  
Student Union Secretary

