

SGA President Declares the State of the Student Body is “Strong”

By John Connolly

Student body president and junior Politics major Anne St. Amant gave her State of the Student Body address on Monday, February 8th. Her address preceded the town hall meeting held with University President John Garvey.

During her address, St. Amant outlined the accomplishments that the Student Government Association (SGA) has seen since the start of the fall semester.

The 2015-2016 school year marked the beginning of SGA, following the disbanding of the Student Association General Assembly (SAGA). The new system, comprised of a senate with two senators from each class and academic school, a treasury board, and executive branch, has according to St. Amant, accomplished much in the few months it has been in place.

St. Amant and the executive branch pushed for and oversaw the creation of three taskforces. They include the diversity, green, and health and wellness task forces. These task forces have held various events and programs, such as “In Their Own Words,” a forum about the coming out process and sharing the stories of Catholic University students. Over 300 attended the fall event, which St. Amant said showed Catholic University “is ready for an open discussion” on LGBTQ issues.

St. Amant emphasized that while much has already been done, she hopes the accomplishments will continue. She plans to expand the community garden and hopes to work on the creation of a cultural center. She said the student body has proven to be strong in the five months she has led the Student Government Association.

However, not all students feel the same way. Junior Politics major Stephen Morris said that not all students at Catholic University might agree that the community is as well off as reported by St. Amant.

“I think the question of whether the state of the student body is strong should be posed to the students of color who see their image in the maintenance staff but not the academic staff, the undergraduates who are paying more for room and board and receiving fewer services, the gay students who are denied recognition and dignity on campus, and the student workers who aren’t paid the wage they deserve or need,” Morris said.

Morris added, “Until CUA offers every student a safe and accepting place to live and learn the state of the entire student body will not be as strong as it can be or ought to be.”

Briana Bee, a senior, echoed Morris’ views. “The state of the student body is only strong when all of its parts are represented equally and fairly. We need to improve on making every student feel recognized and important, so that they can contribute to CUA in a meaningful way.”

Another student, Connor Schumacher, said St. Amant is not fully accurate in calling the state of the student body strong.

“I think when there are groups of students and staff who feel personally isolated or neglected on campus, then we cannot say we are a strong community,” Schumacher said.

Social work senator Jessie Burdette applauded St. Amant for her address and for her hard work.

“The state of the student body was well written by the president of SGA. It was a good update for the students who are not involved in SGA. As well as an opportunity for the members of SGA to reflect on what we have done so far,” Burdette said.

St. Amant, who has not expressed interest in running for reelection, says she plans to continue improving life on campus. The Student Government Association will handle a variety of topics in the coming weeks.