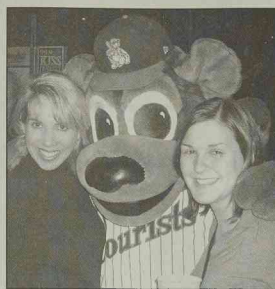


THE BLUE BANNER



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New SGA strives to regain student trust

Katie Meindl
News Reporter

The first meeting of the new Student Government Association (SGA) commenced Apr. 2.

After a week voter turn-out in the elections this year, the new SGA President Casey Crowley and Vice President John Mitchell vowed to get more students involved.

"I had a friend that had a classic 1976 BMW," said Crowley. "It was pristine, but there were two things wrong with it."

"The trunk latch was broken and the muffler dragged on the ground. He bunged the trunks hood to the muffler and it solved all the problems. We want SGA to be that bungee cord."

Over 3,000 students attend UNCA, but less than 300 students voted on Mar. 3 and Mar. 4.

"The reason there's such a low voter turn-out is because people simply weren't as aware of the elections as they could have been," said Crowley.

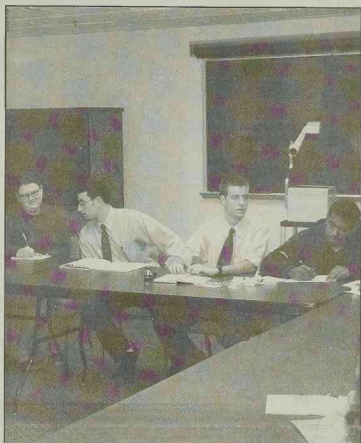
"The low voter turn-out is definitely a disappointment," continued Crowley. "SGA has been hitting below most people's radar. It's just not enough publicity, not enough visibility."

"It's not that SGA doesn't do good work, it's that they're not visible where they do the work. That applies to elections, too."

"SGA's biggest task this year, in terms of relations with the student body, is regaining their trust."

"I think most people, and I was one of these people, think the student government is ineffectual," said Mitchell.

Many people often think of the student government as a club, a very self-serving body of people, according to Crowley.



MAX TAINTOR/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Members of the SGA meet every Wednesday at 9 p.m. in Dining Hall 242. Students are encouraged to attend these meetings.



MAX TAINTOR/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Casey Crowley, president, and John Mitchell, vice president, officially began their new SGA administration Apr. 2.

"The trust that students put into SGA has been broken in the last few years. Quite frankly, people haven't been seeing results. That's not the way it was designed."

**Casey Crowley,
SGA president**

"The trust that students put into SGA has been broken in the last few years," said Crowley. "Quite frankly, people haven't been seeing results. That's not the way it was designed."

No one has asked students what they want yet, according to Crowley.

"We don't know what the students want us to do until we ask them," said Crowley. "Nobody has asked them yet."

The new administration hopes to become involved in the community, as well as on campus and with the student body.

"I think it's been a long time since SGA was really an integral part of the outside of campus," said Mitchell. "The last group of people ran and did not accomplish their goals. It's not necessarily true, but our goals are different. Our goals are reaching out to the students."

The new president and vice president plan on starting the year off with three goals in mind: to make SGA a resource for students and administrators, to create a more

effective student union and to facilitate organizational cooperation.

"We want people to say, 'When I want to do something, when I want to get something done, when I want help, when I need information, when I need to talk to somebody, when I need to complain, I want to go to SGA,'" said Crowley.

"The only thing I'm promising to do is to try to bring people together on the same page," said Crowley. "I'm not promising to keep the cafeteria open longer."

However, if the student body has concerns, such as cafeteria hours and campus activities, the SGA wants to know about them.

"If the people want more coke machines or the cafeteria to stay open longer, that will become one of our goals," said Mitchell.

Both the new president and vice president want to know "what can SGA do for you?"

"Feedback from students has been severely lacking," says Crowley. "What can I do for you? What can the student government body do for you specifically?"

Others disagree about the impact of a deficit.

"I'm not as concerned about deficit spending as many may be," said Jeff Konz, UNCA associate professor of economics. "There's really no reasonable constraint on the amount of money the government can borrow and the negative consequences of borrowing are vastly overstated."

Last week the Senate rejected Bush's proposal for tax cuts of \$726 billion for next year. Instead, the Senate approved a budget for next year that limits tax reductions to \$350 billion because of the high price of war and the possibility of the federal budget deficit reaching a record high of \$400 billion, according to CNN.com.

"I think this was a really good idea," said Bellem. "In fact, I think we should completely eliminate Bush's ability to reduce taxes at this time. Taxes should be lowered when the economy is doing well and we have enough money to pay off our deficit and pay for our activities overseas, not when our country is at war."

But some feel it's still too early to make a decision for next year's budget.

War and weak economy create budget concerns

Kristen Ruggeri
News Reporter

The high costs of war, the surging economy, growing deficits and Bush's request for tax reductions concern many people about United States budget spending.

"I feel that Bush's decision to go to war at this time was a bad one," said Justin Bellem, a sophomore computer science major. "He ignored the state of the U.S. economy. He needs to spend more time worrying about things here at home than he does on the war."

Bush recently proposed a bill to Congress requesting \$74.7 billion to support the United States' war with Iraq and other anti-terrorism efforts, according to CNN.com.

All Senators voted in favor of a resolution that supports Bush and U.S. troops. However, next year Bush wants to cut taxes while boosting military and other spending.

Bush believes reducing taxes will spur the economy, create jobs and boost investment, according to CNN.com.

However, this move could lead to one of the biggest budget deficits in history, said Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.), according to CNN.com.

"People in the United States need to realize we are in a deficit," said Liz Laquage, a sophomore psychology major. "Even if people don't agree with the war, the country is still paying for it. Instead of trying to save people money by reducing taxes, Bush needs to focus on reducing the country's deficit."

Some feel the economy needs to be dealt with first.

"If we're going to reduce the deficit we first need to have a good economy," said Dustin Guyer, a sophomore environmental studies major.

Others disagree about the impact of a deficit.

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U.S. officials indicate war may end soon

Kristen Ruggeri
News Reporter

In the past week, major advancements in United States military strategy in Iraq have brought the war closer to an end.

The U.S. has now shifted its focus to who will take over Iraq after the war has ended.

"I don't think anybody should take over Iraq," said Sarah Stettler, a sophomore sociology major.

"I think the Iraqi people should be free to establish their own form of government."

Last week, administration officials predicted the war would soon be over. Bush's aides have recently begun expressing less worry and more relief.

They have changed their main focus from winning the war to rebuilding Iraq and improving its economy, according to the Washington Post.com.

However, France, Germany and Russia have all stated their belief that the United Nations should play a key role in rebuilding Iraq after the war, according to CNN.com.

Bush met with British Prime Minister Tony Blair in Belfast on Apr. 8 to discuss post-war Iraq, the Middle East and Northern Ireland.

Blair insisted that the United Nations play a vital role in Iraq's reconstruction, but said the Iraqi people should ultimately run the country.

Since the U.N. has not helped us fight this war, it should not expect the United States to do all the dirty work and then take over after we're done, according to Bryan Wall, a senior management major.

"It will be much more expensive for the U.N. to repair Iraq than it is to fight this war," said William Sabo, professor of political science.

"The ideal solution for the United States is to amend its issues with the U.N. and to end the war as quickly as possible and then provide the U.N. with money to clean up Baghdad."



COURTESY OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iraqi citizens stomp on a statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad.

Progress made earlier this week indicates that the war may be coming to an end.

On Apr. 8, sources saw Saddam enter a building in Baghdad and did not see him emerge before or

after the U.S. Air Force dropped four 1-ton bombs on the building, according to *The Washington Times*.

Washington has not made its final determination on the death of Saddam, although a U.S. military

official said he doubts Saddam could have survived the bombing, according to *The Washington Times*.

Regardless of whether the Iraqi leader is dead or alive, Iraqi civilians celebrated the end of the Iraqi regime in the streets throwing confetti, tearing down posters of Saddam and holding up signs Apr. 9.

One of the signs read "Bye, Bye Saddam" in English, according to CNN.com.

The majority of Iraqi forces have now given up, revealed a senior army officer. But the Coalition warns that the war is not over yet, according to CNN.com.

In a symbolic strike against Saddam Apr. 9, U.S. Marines helped Iraqi civilians pull down a statue of the Iraqi leader, located in the center of Baghdad, according to CNN.com.

A U.S. marine placed an American flag and Iraqi flag over the statue's face before removing both and helping pull the statue down,

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