



President and Executive Vice President Candidates Reach Out in Forum

BY TIMOTHY FREY
Staff Writer

It was a familiar setting for the six SBA executive candidates on Wednesday night, seated amongst fellow GW Law students in the friendly confines of Lerner 301; however this time the circumstances were a bit different. This time, instead of fielding questions about case holdings and statute interpretations from Socratic professors, they laid their ideas, leadership qualities, and student body commitments out for the scrutiny of over thirty-five of their peers.

Beginning around 8:15 p.m. on Wednesday night, the SBA hosted a Presidential and Executive Vice Presidential Candidate Forum, open to the entire student body. Present at the forum were presidential candidates David Mitchell, Kenneth Rotter, and John Sorrenti, as well as vice presidential candidates Theresa Bowman, Dan Janow, and Liz Westbrook. Although this forum is required by the SBA Bylaws, last Wednesday was the first in the past four years.

After the current SBA President Brett Sheats opened the event with a welcome, a thank you, and an explanation of how the night would run, the floor was opened to the presidential candidates

to give brief introductory remarks. In these remarks, the candidates stated their backgrounds, qualifications, and goals for the SBA. The floor was then opened for questions to the whole panel.

Questions were many, varied, and at times heated, including inquiries as to previous involvement – or non-involvement – with the SBA, whether or not to publicize the SBA budget and debates, how to improve the SBA website, the benefits of open meetings, and the manner in which each candidate had prepared himself to serve in the position of SBA President. There were also broader questions, including how to make environmental sustainability a higher priority for the school and how to make the University more cognizant of public interest students.



John Sorrenti speaks to the town hall election meeting.

Photo by Katie Earnest

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As Transition Occurs, Current SBA Advice to Incoming Leaders

BY KATIE EARNEST
Editor-in-Chief

Elections for next year's Student Bar Association (SBA) will take place on Tuesday February 24th. Starting Wednesday, candidates kicked off their campaigns with posters, hard lounge tables, and other tactics designed to attract students and get their election information to the students.

As students begin to assess the candidates, the current members of student government have much advice to give to voters looking for experienced, qualified, and motivated people to represent the student body's voice. The race for SBA president is especially noteworthy this year, as there are three candidates to choose from. Last year, current president and 3L Brett Sheats ran unopposed, though he faced minor contention from a handful of write-in candidates ranging from "Jesus Christ" and "Luke Skywalker."

Sheats had this to say about the office of president: "Leading a large student organization of over a hundred volunteer members requires embracing a certain level of decentralization. Let's face it

– law students are generally quite busy people. Students who volunteer what little time they have available to participate and lead student events are rare people to find."

He advised the incoming president to choose a reliable and hard-working Executive Board. "When you have an experienced, knowledgeable, and energized group of Vice Presidents, you can feel comfortable assigning any large task to them and feeling confident that it is being executed properly even without constant direct oversight. Your Vice Presidents will be your eyes and ears on the ground making sure that all is progressing well with the project." He also added, "The most important qualification for an SBA President is the ability to be flexible and react to ill-timed events that may thwart your best-laid plans. There is nothing you can do to change the fact that a club or vendor backed out on you at the last second, making your finely-tuned plan for tonight's big event irrelevant at the eleventh hour. However, because you

know that concurrently run projects are in your executive board's capable hands, you can quickly turn all your energies and connections to the immediate roadblock that has just come your way. It is amazing what obstacles can be overcome when the student body leadership has a strong relationship with the Deans, Faculty, and other students with unique resources. Making these interpersonal connections and recognizing the bonds that the SBA has already worked so hard to create is the ultimate ace-in-the-sleeve for any SBA President."

Second to president is the position of Executive Vice President, an office held by 3L Rahul Reddy. On his position, Reddy imparted, "The EVP's job really encompasses the entirety of the SBA. On the legislative side, the EVP organizes and runs every Senate meeting. The Senate deals with issues ranging from ad-hoc requests to novel ideas of legislation on a myriad of topics. Therefore the EVP has to have an understanding of how each process works in order to run the meet-

ings effectively and answer any questions Senators have on the issue. The EVP is also a member of the Executive Board which puts him/her responsible of many activities as well. The EVP along with the rest of the E-Board have to be there to give advice and their opinion on any major decision / activity. This position is time intensive, but it is definitely rewarding."

One of the biggest misconceptions about the EVP's job, Reddy said, is that people believe that the responsibilities associated with the role "would follow a smooth plan, but in reality a lot of the major events had to be planned on the run. " He gave credit to last year's president Bryan King for leaving the current SBA with an effective strategy for handling every major activity. He also worked with Brett on how to run Senate meeting effectively. He pointed out, "I thought this type of planning would comprise of the majority of my work in the SBA. However, besides the Senate

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SPECIAL SECTION

Candidates for



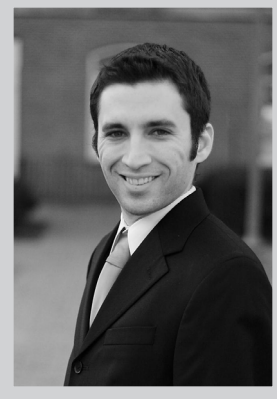
Name: David Mitchell
Position running for: President, Day Division Senator, 3L Day Senator
Year: 2L
Undergraduate Institution: Indiana University
Platform:

As a current SBA outsider possessing over two years of management experience before attending law school, I will effectively and efficiently manage SBA funds, and provide the fresh vision that the SBA needs to achieve a renewed focus on student participation. If elected, I will work for increased transparency and communication with the student body. I will record and post all SBA meetings on the SBA website or portal,

keep all meetings open to the public, conduct day and night SBA body meetings, provide weekly email updates on all substantive issues and social events, hold monthly presidential town hall meetings open to all students, and facilitate direct student input on policy initiatives through TWEN surveys. Additionally, I will enact substantive policy initiatives like establishing a secondary market for textbooks through an SBA run textbook resale fair that will ease the cost of textbooks for all students, improving internet access, and improving the bathroom facilities. Finally, I will be a strong, mature voice for the entire student body and tirelessly advocate student interests.

Pirates, zombies or ninjas?

Pirates – because they get the most bootie ;)



Name: Kenny
Position running for: President, Day Division Senator, 3L Day Senator
Year: 2L (2010)
Undergraduate Institution: Indiana University
Platform: My platform is about communication, JLSA, and the needs to improve the SBA. I will be the most

effective candidate GW has ever had. Among other things, I will hold meetings inside the law school on a weekly basis to keep the student body about significant issues during the past year. We were successful in getting between our reading period and the start of the Internet connection, changes in the scheduling of Barrister's Ball. I will proactively, get things done for the student body and involved every step of the process. Pirates, zombies or ninjas? Zombies would be not be enough to stop the zombies.

Candidates for SBA Executive Vice President



Name: Liz Westbrook
Position running for: Executive Vice President
Year: Class of 2010 (2L)
Undergraduate institution: USC
Platform: Experience. On the job training doesn't work when we've got only 10 months or so to have a positive impact. I am committed to the transparency that everyone has been talking about—my record displays that: I moved Rahul to publicize meetings and publish my minutes. But I think the substance of the job is getting lost in this push for communication: Running the Senate,

handling the budget, overseeing programming, meeting with the deans to tackle the big issues like LRW, the network exam flexibility—this is the job. Feedback, openness, and receptiveness are vital, but without the substantive know how communication won't matter. I am approachable and will be amenable to any and all suggestions. I have proved that as facilities chair by renegotiating vendor contracts, and remedying the situation last semester when the Course Evaluations were taken down to soon. I have done that in my moves for accessibility of the Senate. Every candidate has pledged their commitment and I believe all want to serve the best they can. The difference with me is that I have the most substantive experience to back it up, and this experience will manifest in the most effective student government possible.

Pirates, zombies or ninjas? Easy: Pirates. Zombies are undead-which means they are unfeeling too; and where is the passion and adventure in a cold and calculating ninja? Pirates are flawed and unpredictable and sexy as hell.



Name: Dan Janow
Position running for: Executive Vice-President, 2L Senator
Year: Class of 2011
Undergraduate institution: Franklin and Marshall College
Platform: The most important issue which requires immediate fixing by the SBA is the poor quality of our wireless network. While this would be a focus it must also be remembered that this year the senate took up two major issues: The problems with the LRW grading program

and a system to prevent overlap in fundraising activities. Neither of these two issues had occurred by last year's elections. A platform is less important than having the experience to handle issues as they arise. An EVP has several functions including oversight of the senate, orchestrating major social events and updating the SBA website. These tasks require organizational skills, responsiveness and social programming experience. My organizational skills come from my time as a paralegal with Simpson Thacher. I worked closely with associates and partners in coordinating deals involving millions of dollars and dozens of moving pieces. As an IT intern I had the task of updating the department's website. My programming experience comes from being Rush Chairman of my fraternity, and as senator where I organized large scale social events. My responsiveness can only be judged by my constituents from section 14. I invite you to talk to them.

Pirates, zombies or ninjas? Without a shotgun it would be physically impossible for a ninja or a pirate to blow off a zombie's head. Zombies in a massacre.



Name: Theresa Bowman
Position running for: Executive Vice President, 2L Senator
Year: 1L
Undergraduate Institution: Northwestern University

Platform: As your EVP, my twin primary responsibilities would be acting as an advocate for the student population and running the SBA senate. As a 1L Senator for section 13, I worked to bring the concerns of the 1L class to the senate. When students were concerned about the LRW program, I brought a report on their complaints to the SBA. I have attended every senate meeting this year, and have observed how to manage and run SBA senate meetings efficiently. I have worked to be accessible to students and responsive to their concerns and will approach the job of EVP with the same dedication. In office, my major objectives would be to: See that the current Internet problems are fixed, continue to be a part of the effort to revise the LRW program, improve the SBA Website to include more information on SBA initiatives, work with the CDO to schedule more optional employment info sessions.

Pirates, Zombies or Ninjas? Pirates! No explanation necessary.

SPECIAL SECTION

SBA President

Rotter
 Position running for: SBA President
 Year: 2L
 Undergraduate institution: Arizona State

My candidacy for SBA President is all about communication. As president of two student organizations, the SBA and LSRJ, and public relations for the ACLU, I know how to effectively communicate with the student body. The SBA has failed to improve its dialogue with you. If elected, I will be the most accessible SBA President that you have ever had. For other things, I plan to hold office hours on a weekly basis. The SBA failed to inform you of significant problems that have occurred and kept in the dark about the conflict during Thanksgiving break, our abysmal LRW grading policies, and the LRW program. Elect me and I promise to work for your benefit, and keep you informed in any way possible. Pirates, zombies, hooks and throwing stars will be a thing of the past. Zombocalypse.



Name: John Sorrenti
 Position running for: SBA President
 Year: 2L

Undergraduate institution: Stanford University

Platform: "You who choose to lead must follow." – Grateful Dead

The SBA is the student body's organization that leads best by responding to your collective voice. As a SBA Senator, VP of First Year Students, and Judges Co-Chair for the Moot Court Board, I worked closely with a number of Deans, building a rapport and trust with them that will benefit me in representing the students' interests and concerns to our faculty. My experience organizing a successful orientation program this past summer provided me with

the required skills to succeed. Specifically, I look forward to exploring ways to fix and improve the LRW program. I hope to improve communication between the administration, the SBA, and the student body, increase student committee involvement, and strengthen the coordination between the SBA and the numerous student organizations. Finally, I fully support a more transparent and open process in the SBA, with open meetings and voting and increased insight into the budgeting process. I believe my experience with the SBA, existing relationship with the Deans, and understanding of the process puts me in the best position to perform all the behind the scenes work necessary to achieve these laudable goals. Pirates, zombies or ninjas? Definitely zombies...I admire their persistence.

Candidates for SBA Senators



Name: Deep Singh
 Position running for: 2L Senator & Day Division Senator
 Year: 1L

Undergraduate institution: The University of Virginia

Platform: Experienced. As Section 12 Senator, I worked to make sure my classmates knew what was going on around school and worked to lessen the stresses they dealt with. I brought forth their concerns about LRW and worked to make sure they were heard and the Program responded, even

if changes were not made this year. I helped arrange events for Section 12 and other 1Ls to relax, from evenings overlooking the city to mixers with the Med School. Committed. As a Senator, I will continue to approach communication as a two way street. And I will do more to make sure that you have someone in the Senate available to listen to and act on your concerns and let you know what is going on. I will continue to work to improve your Law School experience – the academic, the facilities, and the extracurriculars. I will continue to work to improve the LRW program. I ran for Section 12 Senator to help ensure you had less stress and will continue to do the same. Bearded. So you can always find me to voice your concerns, ask me a question, or avoid reading with a question, or avoid reading with.

Pirates, zombies or ninjas? Pirate. I can braid my beard like Blackbeard but haven't tried to weave in burning fuses.



Name: Navah Spero
 Position running for: Day Division Senator, 3L Senator
 Year: 2L

Undergraduate institution: University of Pennsylvania

Platform: We are blessed to have such an active, hard-working SBA, but I think the SBA can do more to represent students' interests. Serving such a wide range of student interests is always a challenge. In order to effectively ascertain student needs, address them, and let the student

body know that their needs have been met (or not) requires constant communication. Increased use of the SBA website, Townhall meetings every semester, and weekly or bi-weekly emails from student leaders are necessary in order to govern a group as large as ours. In addition to increased Communication, the SBA should be more transparent. The SBA is the student body organization that spends our money and how they spend it should be information that is available to the student body. In order to achieve both of these goals I will be accessible to the student body through weekly "office hours" where I will be in one of the lounges and available to every student. Not only will I be accessible to the student body but I will also do my best to anticipate student needs. I will work for a more proactive SBA.



Name: Eric Malis
 Position running for: 3L Day Senator
 Year: Class of 2010 (2L)
 Undergraduate institution: Penn State

Platform:

MY GOALS: Enhancing the Law School's long term reputation to increase job prospects. Fixing the LRW program to better serve students' needs. Pursuing a flexible exam schedule policy. Providing you with essential information about what's happening at our school. Responding to your needs efficiently and effectively. MY SBA EXPERIENCE: Helped pass nondiscrimination legislation. Ensured organizations received proper funding to run events. Well versed in who to work with to ensure student concerns are addressed. Served as your bus captain on the ski trip. MY COMMITMENT: As a 3L Senator, I would continue to work diligently with students, deans and faculty to ensure our school enhances its strong

reputation while addressing student needs.

SPECIAL EDITION

TRANSITION *from page 1.*

meetings I planned, I feel a lot of what the SBA does is reactive. We reacted to the issue with 1L's being unhappy with LRW and the issue of school closing an extra day on Thanksgiving. Even events we have planned months in advance like The Halloween Party, we had to re-think the entire party under pressure when our venue bailed out on us with 2 weeks left to the event date. However, I enjoyed the time pressure the position put me under because it really forced me to develop my work, communication, and leadership skills."

In advising students on what to look for in an EVP, he said, "The public should be looking for an EVP that is easily approachable and willing to help on the drop of a dime. I think that's what the position requires. As the head of the Senate, Presidents of student-run organizations rely on you for advice/help in regards to financial and planning issues. I spent a lot of time helping student-run organizations apply for funds and explaining the various SBA financial guidelines. Students in general always have questions, so you need to have an EVP is amicable and willing to sacrifice their time to help out. That's what the SBA is about, trying to make students' lives better. So you want a candidate who will work hard towards that goal."

Concerning the other positions, many current senators noted that it was important for voters to choose candidates who are open and communicative with members of the student body. Comprised of individual representatives from each class, the SBA Senate charters organizations, mediates issues between student organizations, allocates money, and legislates bills dealing with a range of law school issues.

2L Eric Malis said, "As an SBA senator, students frequently approach me with issues about academic policy, facilities and events. I facilitate communication with the right people to ensure student concerns are adequately

addressed." He noted that "students should select candidates whom they feel would represent them in a mature, honest and amicable way to the administration. Determination, accountability, and experience working with the faculty and deans are important to making a strong senator."

3L senator Mike Vogel said that he was interested to find that his job mostly involves advocacy rather than crafting legislation in the student senate. Vogel serves as Chairman of the Technology Committee and as a member of the Finance Committee. "Though I expected to be an advocate, I did not expect to compete to advocate," Vogel noted. "For example, the SBA Senate recognizes that the wireless connectivity in the building needs to be improved. However, when other students make it their individual responsibility to effect change without working through organized channels, the administration receives a mixed message. Recently, law school bloggers decided that the appropriate channel for advocating for improved wireless was the Burns Help Desk which caused additional work for those of us already working to improve connectivity. I did not expect my workload to be increased and my efforts to be made less efficient because of competing advocates."

Vogel said that this example illustrated how "many students set impractical standards and thus are disappointed when improvement takes time. As such, they take it upon themselves to speed things up rather than assisting those already advocating."

That said, Vogel advocated voters to elect candidates who are engaged in law school life and are genuinely interested in improving the law school. "Students with a willingness to work on long term projects are probably the most effective at this job. Two quick examples: (1) we have been working on fundraising conflict legislation for over three months – not because we are slow but because we have solicited

feedback from a number of sources and are doing our best to incorporate the points expressed; and, (2) LRW improvement is a long term project to which we have made small strides all year though it is still not perfect. Both these examples demonstrate a need for a candidate that recognizes that change takes time. I recommend selecting a representative with patience to see these issues resolved in the long term."

As a 1L senator for section 12, Navdeep Singh said, before he became senator, "I did not about know all the issues that the Senate has to deal with, from approving organizational funding to helping the school make sure there is enough soap in the bathrooms. I did not expect to be holding Section townhalls to get their opinions about things like LRW." He added, "As a member of the Senate, I have two major duties. First, I have to let my section know what is going on around school and ensure they have a voice that will be listened to in the SBA. The second is to do everything I can to lessen the stresses they face by actively addressing their concerns, helping them out, and putting together social events."

Singh echoed Malis' comment, stressing, "A Senator has to understand that communication is a two way street. Not only does he or she have to relay information to the public, he or she has to be ready and able to take those concerns back to the SBA and Administration. But talk alone does not amount to much; a Senator has to be willing to act on people's concerns."

CANDIDATES *from page 1.*

The candidates were largely in consensus on several of these issues – including publishing the budget, improving the website, and the importance of environmental sustainability. Other questions, such as how to prepare to serve as President and the way to ap-

proach the problem of public interest, were slightly more divisive.

Finally, current President Brett Sheats posed a single hypothetical to each of the candidates: regarding event planning to Rotter; regarding interactions with the Faculty Curriculum Committee to Sorrenti; and regarding relationships with the SBA Executive Committee to Mitchell.

Around 9:15 the Executive Vice Presidential candidates took the floor and followed a similar format. Each gave brief introductions, focusing mainly on transparency, communication, the LRW program, and the school's wireless network. Next, questions were posed to the VP candidates, including one from Two L Navah Spero regarding why it took the candidates, all of whom are present SBA members, so long to address the network problem this year. There was also a question from Two L Megan Mueller about how to relate SBA failures – such as a failure to change the graded LRW status – with the student body. Other questions included how to make budgeting decisions, how the candidates would appoint other officers, and what the candidates saw as the role of the SBA. Finally, the current VP, Rahul Reddy asked each candidate about how they would run the SBA Senate meetings should they be elected.

Many found the meeting to be very helpful and informative on the qualities and positions of the candidates. According to Two L David Newland, "I was undecided when I came tonight, but the discussion really helped to differentiate the candidates. Beforehand, everyone was talking about the same issues – communication, LRW, etc. – but tonight really helped me to discover where the differences lie. I would encourage any undecided voters out there to take a look at the video and hear what was said."

The forum was, in fact, recorded and will be available for viewing on the portal.

Don't Just Sit There! Get Out and



Tuesday February 24th on the portal at www.law.gwu.edu