SGA co-chairs have big plans for this semester

By Joseph Campbell

“...We deal with a lot of purple tape which is a lot thicker and stickier than red tape,” Jerry Volpe ’02, co-chair of the Student Government Organization (SGA) said as he thought of what the SGA was planning to undertake this semester.

“Wow, that’s corny,” Melissa Murray ’02, the other co-chair, laughingly responded.

“Don’t write that down,” Jerry said, laughing. “Try to make us look better than yourselves.”

All kidding aside, Volpe and Murray have provided a solid ground for future student administrators. Together they have begun to organize SGA records in order to ease the process of maintaining student initiatives from year to year as the students who initiated them graduated. The main goal of their administration has been to try to improve the institutional climate for organizations on campus, and in this they have succeeded and plan on continuing their progress.

The most apt symbol for the progress made and still being sought is the Commons, an area on Hogan 2 directly across from the SGA office. That area is in the process of being transformed into a student center in which everyone can meet. During the shuffling of offices that occurred last year, many student organizations were denied office space because of a lack of room. The Commons is designed to be an open office with filing cabinets, couches, conference tables, and computers for groups of students to use. “This project is my baby,” Murray said. “I thought it would be done by September, but...a lot of things got in the way.”

“We had to jump through hoops,” Volpe said of the ultimately successful attempt to get the Commons opened. As it stands now, the Commons should open by the last week of February, after the furniture is delivered. “Finally!” Murray said. She has been making the process of creating a common area for on-campus student groups a time-consuming job.

The idea of a common area for all students to be able to come together and discuss the ongoing and desired changes of the improvements the SGA plans to enact this semester. Co-sponsorship was a major part of Volpe and Murray’s campaign last year for co-chairs. They aim to have organizations on campus work more closely and organize in common sponsorship for events. They have begun to provide resources to help organizations work together. One example is the forthcoming directory of campus organizations. The SGA itself is also now working on a directory to try to be updated by request of the SGA in order to make all campus organizations possible. It is a long and complicated process.

The formula will enable the fee to increase with inflation and cut off at one percent of tuition. This would enable younger groups that are not adequately funded to get more money as well as allow more funding for older, established groups. Jerry feels that this “would be a universal gain.”

On another front, Brian Doyle, Director of Residence Life Issues is trying to get hand dryers on the male floors of the residence halls this semester. “Now that our hands are clean, we should be able to dry them,” he said, referring to the successful “Got Soap?” campaign of last year.

Some other items on the agenda are finding a way to enable students to donate leftover meals from their meal plans, opening a co-op for students to use the meal plan for late night meals, and making Hogan a more “user friendly place,” said Murray. They also are trying to revitalize the PUB by giving it a different décor and advertising the Friday evening Happy Hour as well as the fact that the PUB is open every day of the week for students of legal drinking age.

Another major SGA event of the semester is the re-launching of the website. The SGA constitution, meeting minutes, and bus schedules are all on-line at http://college.holycross.edu/studentsorg/sga.

With their years at Holy Cross winding down, the two senior co-chairs are looking to pass the mantle on — to preserve the progress they made on key issues and hopefull help students and administrators to pick up where they left off. “Right now, there is a lot of writing by-laws and getting our files in order,” Volpe said. But still, the phone in the office is constantly ringing with new additions and students and students, with crises soon to be solved and meetings that last forever.

Al-Qaeda Members Escaping to Europe and West Africa

By Jim Dukett

Recently, a British intelligence source said that many as a few hundred members of Al-Qaeda have fled Afghanistan to find refuge in bordering countries. They have made their way into Europe and West Africa. Commenting on the prospect of terrorists escaping U.S. attacks on sites throughout Afghanistan, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said, “There isn’t any doubt in my mind that the porous border between Iran and Afghanistan has been used for Al-Qaeda and the Taliban to move into Iran.” This report comes at a time when investigators are realizing that much of the planning for the attacks perpetrated on Sept. 11 were in fact made in Europe. Gen. JosephRalston, commander of U.S. forces in Europe, the Mediterranean and Western Africa said of the threat, “There is a lot of work to do on our own back yard, the European theater.”

There is continuing speculation that Al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters are being aided out of Afghanistan by the Hezbollah, a militant Islamic organization. The organization has been linked to the Islamic movements in Europe or West Africa, the United States. Ralston said, “Those are the areas we should concentrate on, and the Baltics.” To combat the threat of Al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters finding safe havens in Europe or West Africa, the United States has begun to step up its intelligence sharing with other nations and improve the network with which the world can share information on the movement of terrorists.

The 203 page report also finds other