Food for Thought:
I ideas for an SGA
President to Build on

An Honors Thesis (Honors 499)
by
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Advised by
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Foreword

When I greeted the 1993 Freshman class upon their arrival at Ball State, I used the theme of a rollercoaster to describe the many changes and experiences that they would experience and endure while attending Ball State University. In the same way that merely attending a university causes one to assess one’s motivations and goals, so too did this position force me to reevaluate who I truly am.

So many times throughout my term, I found myself saying, “I wish somebody had told me that.” Although reinventing the wheel teaches each inventor how to make a wheel, it allows for a wide range in quality and provides little time to improve on the previous invention.

To help facilitate this growth, I have jotted down some of those ideas to share with you. My Goal for this project is not to provide guidance, but offer food for thought to the SGA presidents of the future.

It is the President’s job as the Chief Executive to accept, reject, or refine the opinions of others to meet the needs of the student body. I wish all who seek to serve their fellow students the best of success and hope that this work may prove helpful to them, if even in the smallest way.

Best wishes,

[Signature]

Adam Mildred
SGA President 1993-4
Acknowledgements

There comes a time that one should take a moment to thank those that have helped them along their journey. My four years at Ball State University have caused me to grow in ways I never imagined possible. It is clear that I would never have had the opportunities for growth if it weren’t for a whole host of characters in the community that provided guidance, encouragement, and challenges along the way. For this service, I thank them.

I would like to especially thank the following:
Above all else, I want to thank my God who created me and continually finds ways to refine His creation, even when I don’t want Him to, by using people and events around me to challenge me to grow
Ang, Rowan and Lauranne - my SGA partners in crime, without whom I would have never been able to learn and grow from this experience
My family - for always being a support for me, both emotionally and financially and for coming up with special words of encouragement - Mom for always saying, “You can do anything you put your mind to.” Dad for his “It’s not YOUR anything” speech and my brother Colin who always made a point to remind me that a title didn’t make me anything more important than his big brother
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Dr. Barb Jones - the SGA advisor that clarified my options as a leader, often shed light on the path of least resistance to our objectives, and was quick to offer guidance from her broad base of experience
Annette Eder - my girlfriend that has been a strong support throughout my term and this project who also let me take over her computer to prepare it.
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Ajmal Razak - the English prof who challenged me to go beyond writing and try to touch my reader’s soul with my words ....making them more than words
Ang Cooksey - the Honors lady who befriended me as a scared freshman and works harder than most people can fathom to help strangers on their way toward their futures
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forword</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duties and Responsibilities</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science 369 Internship</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGA Sponsorship Contract</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One on One Budget Talks Form</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Management information from Ron Dalton</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success Report Form</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Director’s Folder from the 1993-4 Administration</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grab Bag O’ My Thoughts</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointments</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It Ain’t YOUR Office</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisors</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Sponsoring Organizations</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archives-KISS theory</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition of power</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

As the President of the Student Government Association, I was constantly learning and growing into the job. Although we accomplished almost all of our goals, I have found myself thinking that I would have made some decisions differently. As I reflected on the year, I realized that a smoother transition would have been an invaluable asset to us.

We found out that we won the election at 1:30 am and I had the keys to the office by 5:00 pm. The outgoing and new Executive groups met once to discuss their roles in a rather cursory fashion.

Since I had very little guidance or transition training from my predecessor, I had to stumble through each of my different duties as best as I could. It seemed as if the SGA car was abruptly halted and turned off while in the middle of an interstate lane where I was expected to climb in and drive immediately instead of leaving the engine running while the drivers switched.

After this experience, it then became an organizational as well as a personal goal to ensure that this didn’t happen when we left office. We established a week-long transition period to both allow for the variable of a recount as well as the opportunity to fill the next group in on what is expected of them in each position.
In addition to this transition period, I also wanted to provide a base for future presidents to work from that would include a journal of my observations, a descriptive list of the many duties of the President, and helpful advice from others on the decision making processes he/she might use as well as tips on how to better manage the Senior Staff. This project is divided into two main sections that describe the job, offering suggestions for the new President, and present a few tools that might be of use to him and his team. My barest objective for this project is to use others' thoughts as well as my own to inspire thought on how to better serve the students as the SGA President.

As references for this study, I have chosen Theory Z, Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun, a selection from the Atlantic Monthly, materials from BSU’s Student Voluntary Services, and my weekly journal entitled, "There and Back Again With Many Lessons Learned." Each provides insight into my overall conclusion that one’s success as a leader greatly depends upon two factors within his/her span of control: the decisions one makes and the relationships the leader has with the Staff and others that are affected by the decisions.

Theory Z, by William Ouchi is a study of both the Japanese management style and our Western style of leadership. Ouchi then devises a form of the Japanese model that will better match our cultural differences. Presenting a sampling of American business that have
adopted these management principles, Ouchi spoke with detail of their successes.

The two most important pieces of Theory Z that are germane to this study and the SGA presidency are the Ringi decision making process and ensuring that the "people" element is not forgotten as the group works toward its goals. The Ringi process is a way that decisions can be made with the greatest possible cohesion, and is discussed later in this project.

Cohesion is important to any group's effectiveness, and it relies greatly on how much the leadership actually cares about its followers. Theory Z strongly speaks in favor of promoting socialization and friendship within the workers' ranks. Although I will draw on these two concepts later, I needed to reject a large portion of the text because it focused on a corporate level that was not relevant to our small group setting.

A text that I found to be helpful throughout my term and in preparing this project was the "Attila" work. After hearing its praises as a basic management primer, I picked up a copy before we returned for the Fall '93 semester. Although I specifically refer to it a few times, I highly recommend that anyone thrust into a leadership position read it thoroughly to at least consider its suggestions.

I came upon the Atlantic article by way of Dr. George Jones who offered it as a resource for this project. Although it examined the different leadership characteristics of some of our most famous United States
Presidents, it spent much of its time demonstrating that leadership takes three equal involvements: the leader, the led, and the mutual goals that help bring the three groups together. This information would have proven helpful to me as I worked through my term in the SGA because I often found myself in disagreement with others over critical issues.

I was able to draw practical, "battlefield" knowledge of SGA leadership from my weekly internship reports. This proved helpful as I designed the project to be a reference for future SGA presidents who could then build on the lessons we learned along the way.

It was with these ideas and texts in mind that I gleaned several points that helped to frame a group of relevant principles and a management style suited to my needs as a student leader. Over the next few pages I will discuss these principles and then offer management models that a leader may explore.

**MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES**

1. **Maintain the human element in the organization.**

   The Senior Staff is made up of volunteers with a variety of motivations, but each has the primary responsibility to succeed in academic arena. Overtaxing them with their volunteer work may cost

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1 Wills, p. 70
2 Ouchi, p. 195
them their academic success and you a solid worker.

It should also be noted that workers will almost always remain self-interested. They may need to step back from the group out of self preservation. By honestly caring about them and their personal goals will help tap that self-interest and build loyalty to the group.\(^3\)

As the elected leader of the group, it is important that the President sees to the needs of others. If they are preoccupied with a problem in their personal lives, one should help them or allow them the opportunity to resolve it and get back to business.

2. Facilitate the growth of friendships in the group.

It is important to tie the group together with the additional bonds of friendship because the direct tie to the leader may some day be strained. In this manner, the interwoven ties reinforce each other.\(^4\) By recognizing that this organization is an opportunity to accomplish the goals amongst friends, one can count on higher morale amongst the group and stronger ties to the leadership.\(^5\) Mutual loyalty may be the critical variable to achieving success.

It must be noted that, in social settings, the leader must strive to find a balance between social egalitarianism\(^6\) and retaining one's leadership

\(^3\) Ouchi, p. 222

\(^4\) Ouchi, p. 83

\(^5\) Ouchi, p. 204

\(^6\) Ouchi, p. 128
role. Too much social interaction and the leader no longer has the respect attributed to the position because he is now one of the followers; an equal that opens the door to being exploited. Too little accomplishes the same as if the leader was totally alienated from the group.

3. Establish clear and common objectives for the group.

This not only helps to set the standards for performance, it also builds trust amongst the team because members can assume that everyone else is working for the same success. As one leads from the front of the group towards these common objectives, he is able to reassure the follower that each piece of the project, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is essential to the group's success. In the absence of complete instructions, the common objective allows a framework in which the group can use initiative and creativity in moving toward these goals in confidence.

4. Joint cooperation is essential to the decision making process.

When in disagreement on a particular issue for the group to grapple, approach the situation thinking, "He must know something I don't." In this way, the leader can either find the best answer to the problem or learn that the presentation of the idea was not clear enough for others to grasp.

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7 Roberts, p. 102
8 Ouchi, p. 72
9 Ouchi, p. 208-9
10 Ouchi, p. 205
MANAGEMENT MODELS

There are three management models that are a part of this study: a typical western model, what William Ouchi calls "Theory Z" management, and the system that I developed that is a mixture of the two that better fit our needs as student leaders. With each section, I will explain how each of these models might be best used in an SGA setting.

The Western Style

The western style involves a great deal of adherence to a hierarchy of management and responsibility. A single person is often the only one involved in making a decision for the rest of the organization. Because of this limited involvement, this method is the quickest of the decision-making/management models presented here. Many difficulties often arise, however, as a result of not communicating the intended action with one's colleagues prior to its enactment.

Because the rest of the group had limited involvement with the decision, they might feel little loyalty to its success. Further, this breeds competition, rather than cooperation between departments as each continues to go on its own, autonomous way.

In an effort to both inform and consult his subordinates, a leader in a

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11 Ouchi, p. 45
12 Ouchi, p. 62
western model will often convene meetings to discuss the issues facing the group. Following the group’s hierarchy, he meets with his senior advisors and then decides on a course of action to be followed throughout the organization. Although this may be the most efficient in the short run, it runs the risk of causing subordinate leaders to feel unimportant. This lack of direct involvement can be the catalyst for other loyalty-related problems, as well.

Danger lies in making too many major decisions without involving the rest of the Staff. If a leader makes a habit of making unilateral decisions, he sets the example for the Staff to follow. They may then perceive that it is acceptable to make major policy decisions without even consulting the group! This was my experience, and I was occasionally left naked to questions about an action I knew nothing about.

The Student Government Association’s Constitution and By-Laws establish a rigid hierarchy with the President at the top. Although modeled after our federal government’s system, it has one major difference: The top four officers are elected together as a slate instead of individually.

This difference presents the President with new challenges because he has an obligation to keep his teammates involved in his decisions. Although the treasurer and secretary positions are not directly in the decision-making flow, the performance of their position’s specific duties is
critical to his ability to fulfill the rest of the President's job. It is clear, therefore, that something needs to be done to make this western model more suited to the SGA Executive partnership.

The Theory Z Style

The Japanese Ringi style is a marked contrast to the western model in that everyone is involved in the decision making process. As a problem arises, the most junior person begins to research and develop a solution to the problem that he will present to everyone involved in the organization. He will run his suggested solutions through the senior officers, gaining their approval and adding their suggestions. As can be imagined, this style takes a great deal of time and effort to work.\(^{13}\)

Although this extra time may seem costly, it produces several benefits. Not only does everyone know about the decision, they have also had the opportunity to offer their suggestions which gives a great deal of ideas to work from. The involvement of every worker also allows for the group to accept the responsibility for its success together.\(^{14}\)

Although this deliberate method may prove to be the best for building loyalty to a decision, it also presents new challenges to the leaders. In essence, the leader has little real power to execute decisions according to his will, except for what influence he can exert on his peers.

The most critical obstacle to this method is the amount of time it

\(^{13}\) Ouchi, p. 45

\(^{14}\) Ouchi, p. 45 and 190-1
takes to perform it. All individuals involved in the Student Government Association are students that have great responsibilities from the academic arena, and therefore have limited time to allocate to the group.

While serving as the President, I had an incredibly difficult time just keeping my partners informed of the decisions I made, much less gaining each of their opinions on the matter. I found it to be very time consuming to try to include the entire staff on every major issue. This time-cost, balanced against the importance of keeping the staff involved, caused me to explore variations of the two, until I found one I liked.

My Mixed Style

My mixed style recognizes that time does not always allow for all seventeen members to be informed of a major decision, yet they have a vested interest in how it will be made as well as the final outcome. The other three members of the Exec have a greater interest than the rest of the staff, however. It is with these factors in mind that I explain this mixed style.

The ringi model is, in essence, a great circle with several equal members around it involved in the process. As explained earlier, this not a cost-effective method for our group to use. However, it can be used on a smaller scale within the Exec. When applied, this created an inner circle from which we could chart out the path our Exec wanted the SGA to
follow. In this way, we were able to keep each other informed and supportive of a decision that we made together.

This mixed model provided a great deal of support for me as I could now say that an unpopular move was an Exec. decision, rather than one I had made arbitrarily. This also empowered the other three members a great deal as they were able to exercise a great deal of influence in matters not directly related to their Bylaws-prescribed duties.

When this method would break down, and I was forced to make decisions on my own because of time or circumstances, it often caused waves that could have been avoided had I remained consistent. I found it helpful to write notes to myself that reminded me to communicate and trust my partners.

Working with the rest of the team and maintaining communication was difficult to balance with conflicting class and work schedules, as well as the regular performance of our duties. To keep them as involved in and informed of the decisions being made, I used three different methods.

The first was to employ our weekly Senior Staff meetings to discuss the pressing issues of the week, and develop a position for us to follow. I would treat this as an “outer circle” from which I would seek comments and opinions and then offer the Exec’s thoughts on the matter to work toward some cohesion. In this manner, the staff would be able to express their concerns and influence the Exec’s position on matters on a weekly
basis. They would also be informed of whatever the group’s decisions were.

The second method I used was to actively seek the individual opinions of staff members on matters that they were not directly involved with. In this way, I was better able to gauge the feelings of the staff and also gain another viewpoint of a problem. By providing these views, the staff member was also made to feel important and vital to the organization.

Thirdly, when faced with decisions that are not critical, like the determination of the new SGA logo, I included the entire staff in the ringi method in determining the outcome. In this way, the staff was also made to recognize their sustained importance to the group.

Another part of Z that I wish I had applied more was the continued stress on the “People” element. We planned certain functions around socialization at different parts of the term. Pizza was always a favorite for late evening meetings, as were the cookies at Ang’s for the last meeting before Christmas Break. Home-made pizzas on our retreat were big winners, as well.

Each of these events provided an opportunity to not only work together, also grow together. I highly recommend that future Exec teams plan a few of these “fun” events that help to build cohesion and create more and stronger ties to the group.
Duties, Powers, and Responsibilities for the New President

It is important that a new President of the SGA become familiar with the basic operations and responsibilities of the position as quickly as possible. Recognizing this, I will attempt to offer as complete a list of your duties as I have been able to gather from a variety of sources like the By-Laws and the Faculty Handbook, as well as a brief discussion of each.

Although there may come a time when you wish that there was an exhaustive list of duties, it currently does not exist. Recognizing that your role will continue to evolve over time, it would behoove you to seek additional guidance from your immediate predecessor as well as your faculty advisor to determine if there are corrections to this list.

As I discuss the different roles, I will also pepper the section with a description of some of the tools you may have at your disposal. In order for the President to fulfill his* job, there are certain powers that he can exercise.

* When a masculine pronoun is used, it is gender neutral unless otherwise stated. Please note that, as of 1994, every woman that has run for President of SA (now SGA) has won the election.
Role #1: Chief Executive

You are ultimately responsible for everything the organization does or fails to do. Your vision, or lack thereof, will determine where the group goes during the year.

Chances are, you might have made a campaign promise or two to get into office. To accomplish these goals, you will appoint and direct the efforts of a Senior Staff that reports directly to you. In addition to this team, you will have the opportunity to try to enlist the Student Senate in meeting your goals.

The Senate may have goals and positions that are different than those of your administration. As they work to address different issues, it may prove helpful to be actively involved in the process.

Although you have no voting power within the Senate itself, you do possess a veto power that can be used for a variety of reasons, including an effort to kill the issue or to ask for a revision from the body. By being involved early in the process, you may help to avoid any unnecessary conflict within the organization.

Role #2 Spokesman for the SGA

As the President, the public generally wants to hear what you are or are not accomplishing for them. You have a vested interest in what they think, because student opinion can help shape the positions of both the
Daily News and the Student Senate.

By my experience, the DN was the primary means by which we communicated with our constituents. We accomplished this through an aggressive advertising campaign and by requesting monthly wrap-up articles that would run on the highest readership days.

The mere presence of the SGA logo in several pages via the ads gives the impression that you are working hard for the students, especially those that do not bother to read all the articles. Ads can be very powerful tools as you seek to inform the community of your work.

The beautiful (and the dangerous) thing about the ads is that you can control the text next to the SGA logo. This use of propaganda has certain implied responsibilities, as well. If you make the decision to not to tell the truth and someone finds out, you have risked your credibility as a leader and an organization. This principle extends to all interviews, as well.

The Daily News generally assigns one reporter to specifically cover SGA, both the Senate and the Exec. It has been my experience over the last four years that they have always had difficulty with the separation of the two branches, and I had to make an extra effort to clarify it for them.

The reporter generally covers the Senate meeting and is then available for any other interviews that either of you initiate. I requested an end of the month report that allowed for us to discuss the month's activities and issues.
Issuing press releases proved helpful for initiating other interviews and improving the accuracy of the reporting, but was also very time consuming. I was able to steer clear of this by simply giving a phone call to the News Editor or the reporter directly.

I also found that it proved helpful to mentally prepare sound bites that I knew had a better chance of making the paper because they were clear as well as succinct. Because this would aid me to better influence the reporter’s perception of the facts, I could more easily shape the way the information would be presented to the public.

I don’t take much stock in Niccolo Machiavelli’s The Prince, but I believe that he was right in emphasizing the importance of how the public perceives you as their leader. Because the overwhelming majority of people only “see” you, rather than “touch” you, it is essential that your public presentation is flawless.15

“Old Nick” advises that, in the event that you need to be harsh with someone who will then publicize it, it is essential that the public believe that you are merciful, trustworthy, generous and devout so they can attack this individual for you. His thought is incomplete, I fear, because he omits the idea that such an ostracized individual can cripple a leader by drawing attention to your clear hypocrisy, a la Richard Milhouse Nixon.

One final lesson that I learned the hard way about interviews and

15Machiavelli, The Prince. Chapter XVIII.
public speaking: You can’t get your words back after you have let them go.

**Role #3 Chief Representative of the Students**

For all practical purposes, you ARE THE RECOGNIZED VOICE of the students in all matters. If a journalist wants to know what is happening here at Ball State, he will probably call you first. This is a tremendous responsibility because you need to reflect the feelings of the students as a whole to the best of your ability and not embarrass yourself, the students, or the institution at any time.

As the Chief Lobbyist for the students, you need to be involved in making Student Senate initiatives that have become SGA policy heard, if not implemented. It is your ultimate responsibility to see that the will of the Senate is expressed to the Ball State and Indiana community.

Along with the work, you will be invited to represent the students in several social functions. It is in this realm that you are perceived as the “Student Ambassador” to various groups, including the Board of Trustees, the BSU administration, and key figures of the Indiana and Muncie communities. It is essential to remember that the way you appear and conduct yourself before these people is how they will perceive the student body.
Role #4 Chief Coordinator of the SGA Services

There are several services for which you are responsible, including Student Legal Services, indirectly the Consumer Education Council, the Typing Center, the Birth Control Information Center and very indirectly the Escort Service. Since the completion of this project, this may have changed.

In managing the efforts of these different areas, it is important to determine what degree of autonomy you wish to grant them. I found that it was easier for me to delegate responsibility for these services to others in the Executive Branch except for the Birth Control Information Center and Student Legal Services.

SLS was the easiest to work with because the person who runs it is an attorney and a professional. I was content to keep a very relaxed view of the service and met with her very occasionally to discuss the service and ways to improve it with SGA's assistance.

We funded the CEC to the tune of $1500 a semester, and found that it was appropriate for us to have a certain degree of influence in its operations that hadn't been realized in the past. As a result, I directed the Director of Community Affairs to establish a solid link with the CEC and ensure that they were submitting monthly reports on how they spend SGA money.
Recognizing that the Secretary manages the office assistants, to include hiring, firing, and payroll, I figured that it would be logical to delegate the management of the student-run Typing Center. LZ quickly adjusted to this new task, and incorporated it with her other duties. She worked to ensure that they remained consistent in providing their service, yet balanced with a certain degree of autonomy. LZ did a wonderful job ensuring that the center ran smoothly this year, and it demonstrated her solid commitment to putting the “people element” in management.

**Role #5 University Senator**

In this role, you are one of eight or nine students that sit on this governing body that is fundamentally the faculty governing body. To me, they seem to listen to an outspoken President a little more than they do to the others because of the position as the chief spokesman of the students.

Although outnumbered in votes, this role allows you to be a powerful member of this body. As the SGA president, you have the responsibility to appoint several students to standing committees of the U Senate. You can use this to your advantage by appointing the other, elected U-Senators to fill these posts, as this would increase their involvement, recognition, and clout within the U-Senate body. It didn’t dawn on me to do this until after my appointments had been made, so I had no opportunity to actually test this idea out.
Role #6 Mr./Ms. Miscellaneous

If something needs to be accomplished and it doesn’t provide the time for you to delegate it out to someone else, it’s your responsibility to make it happen. Proper planning can save you from experiencing this too often, but it should be anticipated.

It has been my experience that the more you farm out to other folks that are dependable, the better off you will be mentally. It is incredibly easy to let everything pile up on your desk and not divvy the load up, but it is also very dangerous because you are human and as subject to running out of time or steam as the next person.

I have learned the hard way (six weeks of mono) that it is not favorable to assume that you can do it all yourself. Remember that if you are a leader, then there are people out there who follow at least your goals.16 Incorporate them into your plans and they can be counted on to help some of this miscellaneous stuff disappear.

16 Wills, p. 69
Bibliography


Machiavelli, Niccolo. The Prince. Chapter XVIII.


Appendices

I have provided these sections for you to consider as you work your way through your term. They include the following sections:

- Political Science 369 Internship
- SGA Sponsorship Contract
- One on One Budget Talks Form
- Volunteer Management information from Ron Dalton
- Success Report Form
- The Director's Folder from the 1993-4 Administration
- Grab Bag O’ My Thoughts
  - Appointments
  - Budgeting
  - It Ain't YOUR Office
  - Advisors
  - Co-Sponsoring Organizations
  - Archives-KISS theory
  - Transition of power
There and Back Again

With Many Lessons Learned

Adam L. Mildred
Political Science 369
Dr. Roger Hollands
15 April 1994
Early in September, a gentleman by the name of Kyle Babcock stopped by the office and left me a note. It read, "All these things will pay off in the end. Kyle Babcock--SA President '83-'84." I didn't quite appreciate it nearly as much then as I do now, as I have a little more time to reflect on the past year.

Throughout this appendix, I will talk about my feelings and observations as President on a weekly basis. My mistakes and successes are presented from my point of view and none other. Although your experiences will be different, I hope that this will be a valuable resource for you to build on, and learn from mine.

Occasionally, you will find that I have highlighted the hard lessons that I have learned along the way. They are presented as advice for you to accept or reject as you will, because you are in charge now.

In addition, I have peppered my reports with the names of key individuals that have earned a position in my experience. These references are not intended to harm a person in any way, but rather to serve as a testament for what I felt and learned from them while in this position.

Serving as President of the Student Government Association has been one of the most painful and rewarding experiences of my life. I have learned more about the very real responsibilities of leadership than I have in any academic class here at Ball State or anywhere else. I hope my thoughts will aid you as you work through your term.

21 August - 27 August 1993

After working here at school for the last month, it was difficult to feel any real beginning of the school year. In fact, the return of our fellow students did little to heighten the stress for preparing for the year, rather than shake and stir us like I had anticipated.

In assessing where we needed to focus in our energy in the political arena, we compared the accessibility of both state and local officials, as well as the amount of resources needed to maintain the current levels of involvement.

We have made the decision to work more with local officials for three major reasons: our limited time and financial resources, a mayor nearing the end of his first term and possibly seeking reelection, and that the state government would not be focusing their time on budgets or
allotments to the universities.

We started off the year with a bang by speaking to the freshman class and taking Muncie’s mayor for a tour of off-campus areas that needed improved lighting, street repair, and replaced signs. We began preparation for this tour several weeks ago by conducting a scientific sample of where Ball State students live off-campus, and then searching for the most heavily populated areas that needed the most attention.

Throughout our dinner and walk, we emphasized our desire to become more involved with the Muncie community. Dominick’s reception was very positive, as he stressed his mutual interest in bettering the relationship between BSU and Muncie.

We have introduced a cooperative effort with the Muncie Building Commissioner and Sanitation Department. We ran a half page ad that included both a map and information about trash collection days for the off-campus students.

I’m very excited about the coming year, as doors seem to open for us and our projects/platform items. Dr. Worthen’s suggestion last spring to get everything done before the winter sticks heavily in my mind.

Free, anonymous HIV testing has support from the university administration, Jesse Jackson, Jr. will be a part of our Martin Luther King Day celebration, we’re preparing a voter registration drive for the mayoral election next fall, and we’re working to promote SGA in the public eye as much as possible.

At the close of the week, I received a phone call from *A Current Affair* in New York, expressing interest to travel here and tape the Ball State reaction to the Letterman/Leno faceoff. Scrambling to set up hotel reservations, faxing maps and travel data, briefing BSU’s administration about the situation and establishing a plan with the Sigma Chi fraternity made for a busy Friday afternoon. I think the the national exposure will be a positive move for BSU, but I’m still nervous. I’ll tell you how it goes.

28 August - 3 September

This week was a whirlwind as we planned for and met with Danny Tepper of *A Current Affair*. We had scrambled Friday afternoon to fax out a memo providing directions, his hotel reservation, and various contact numbers here at Ball State. To take it one step further, we made a serious effort to ensure all the appropriate administrators and BSU representatives
were informed about the anticipated visit. Our primary goal was to promote a positive impression of Ball State to the rest of the country, and I feel we accomplished that. Meeting the producer for lunch, taking him for a tour of BSU’s facilities, and showing him around for positive visions of Ball State wore me out. I made arrangements for him to tape David Letterman’s fraternity brothers watching the premiere of his show on CBS.

The local CBS affiliate, the Daily News, and the Muncie Star all made their contributions to the media circus that erupted. By ensuring that the university knew as much as I did as soon as possible and steering Tepper away from any pubs and toward a controlled environment helped to present a positive impression of BSU.

Tuesday saw the first staff meeting of the year. I did most of the talking, as a great deal of information needed to be communicated in a short period of time. Our staff meetings are Tuesdays at 9:30pm to allow for night classes and be before Senate meetings. One hour before we meet as an entire executive branch, the four of us who got elected get together to regroup and make adjustments to the staff agenda I have prepared. I think that this will prove very beneficial for us in the coming semester.

Senate on Wednesday proved relatively uneventful. I sent the Executive Assistant, Tim Stratton, to pay a visit to the Student Voluntary Services open house, because I just couldn’t fit it into my schedule. Tim is a really sharp, friendly guy, and I think that we’ll continue to use his talents to demonstrate support from SGA to other campus groups when one of us is unable to go to their programs.

Thursday was spent planning for the weekend in Syracuse. Each year, the four Execs attend an away football game as part of an alumni boosters program. Initially, I had difficulty accepting this “perk” of the position because I thought student fees were spent on sending us there. I was very relieved to learn that Syracuse’s compensation to BSU to play them covered the entire trip.

The week pretty much ends when we arrive in Syracuse. I played a bit of a task master by having the others review our budget on the plane. I’ll begin the next installment with a wrap-up of the trip.

4 September-10 September

Oh my! The trip to Syracuse opened my mind to a whole host of ideas and feelings. Maybe it’s because I’m still caught by the wonderment
of it all, but I still have the feeling like a kid who has just been given the 
key to the toy store. Yet amidst the giddy excitement, I feel as if I’ve 
grown older, perhaps wiser.

This past week was filled with the trip to Syracuse, budgeting our 
allotment, planning our staff retreat, and hammering out a draft proposal 
for anonymous HIV testing on the Ball State campus. It was a busy, 
abbreviated week, yet somehow, in the midst of all that, I was able to 
complete some homework.

On the trip, the four of us were able to do some much needed 
catching up. We got the opportunity to meet with some of the largest 
donors to Ball State, some of our state legislators, and the members of the 
Board of Trustees on a social basis. After seeing this different facet of Ball 
State, I have learned that there is considerably more to the university 
community than I had previously imagined.

In planning our budget for the rest of the year, the four of us each 
picked at and questioned the plan on the ride to Syracuse. Using this time 
proved beneficial, as we weren’t going to be able to sit down together to 
discuss our expenditures for the coming year. Staff went longer than we 
had anticipated, yet is going much smoother than I had ever anticipated.

One of our key topics during the staff meeting was the upcoming 
retreat. We briefly went over the agenda that included trust building 
exercises, protocol talks, spending procedures, a who’s who at Ball State 
session complete with a university hierarchy chart, and one on one budget 
sessions to discuss each staff member’s budget. Two members of our team 
are in sororities participating in rush, and we planned the business part of 
the retreat around their schedules.

Rowan and I spent the greater part of Labor Day afternoon 
hammering out a draft proposal to bring anonymous HIV testing to the Ball 
State campus. Our intention was to complete the draft and run it by BSU’s 
Health Education Coordinator, Sallie Eddleman. Once she returns the draft, 
and we make the appropriate adjustments, we will then submit it to Dr. 
Mikesell, Dean of Students.

I can feel the wind rushing by me as we ride this rollercoaster. A 
great deal of stress has been placed on us, and we have been challenged to 
meet our campaign goals. I just hope that we get there before March. I 
can’t wait until this retreat to strengthen and regroup this team.

11 September-17 September
The retreat proved to be one of the smartest moves I think we could have made while building this team to make the platform happen. We started off with trust games and wrapped up with a morning marshmallow fight. By sandwiching our business portion between between recreation time, we emphasized that we are on this rollercoaster ride together.

In preparing for this past weekend, Angela did most of the work preparing our budget talks and spending procedures, Rowan handled the trust games, and I facilitated both the organization and the actual discussion. Some stresses began to show between the four of us as external forces pulled at certain members of us.

Laura, SGA Secretary, is very dedicated to her sorority, and has stated that during the month of September, she would need to put that group’s needs ahead of SGA. Sorority rush is a unique beast in that it eats an incredible amount of time in both preparation and the actual membership drive. That Laura has been able to balance the two at all while attending classes amazes me. The problem for us is that there are times that are essential for her to be a part of, like our Monday agenda meetings, and this past weekend’s staff retreat.

Rowan is a relative newcomer to SGA, and has been thrown into his position as President of the Senate having never been in the Senate. Couple this with a hostile group of committee chairs, a majority of whom endorsed our primary competitors in last spring’s election. Rowan’s primary concern is not necessarily the quality of the minutes taken, but with that he needs her as a source of support during the meetings. Further, she can intervene in the discussion as needed.

The problem lies in that if I push Laura too hard, she may break and need to step away. Rowan has been hostile through this period, and I have been trying to keep the pieces together. Unfortunately, this has damaged the relationship between Rowan and I a bit because he feels as if I am going too easy on her and not meeting his needs by not confronting her with the problems until after the rush is over.

I tend to be as sensitive to the problems of those workers around me, because loyalty is a tough thing to build, and damn near impossible to rebuild. We need Laura around here, and I want to address any problems with as little confrontation as possible.

Not much is happening in the Senate, which doesn’t really surprise me because the leadership within it is very self-centered. Very little is done in developing the future leaders because the committee chairs are
busy with their own projects and aren’t aggressively seeking to retain their committee members. Over the last four years, Senate has suffered from a revolving door for its members, and I would say that it has gotten worse as the committee leadership has become very one-minded and stifles the efforts of anyone who dares challenge their views.

I found this very difficult to work with as a senator, and have seen it get worse with time. In analyzing the situation, I feel the way we can slow down and ultimately stop this negative action is to continually stress that one of our duties as officers of this organization is to build for the future. I am attempting this with the Exec this year, and it seems to be working.

I have established after action reports that I affectionately call “Success” reports. I am getting anxious to see the staff begin to accomplish our goals, and have a checklist developed that allows us to review our weekly progress during our Staff meetings. I’m trying to require as little as possible from the staff to maximize their project time, so no typing is required on these projects. I guess I can compromise a professional appearance for efficient and accurate records for the next administration to build on.

18 September-24 September

This weekend I spent out in the field with the ROTC battalion, and pushed myself to attempt an Australian rappel from a helicopter skid. What this entails is leaping out off a helicopter skid facefirst and descending down two ropes about as wide as your pinkie. There were cadets who were apprehensive about the standard rappel that they were to perform, and, as a staff officer, I needed to set the example for them to follow.

That’s how I feel sometimes in this position. The public looks directly at me as the president and spokesman of SGA, even though there are about 75 other members of the organization. For whoever my successor is, I recommend that he/she learns this very quickly, and use it as an advantage while being mindful that you need the support of the people lower in the organization’s hierarchy in order to get anything accomplished.

On Tuesday evening, we had a Cardinal Roundtable meeting. Dr. McKonkey, Vice President of Student Affairs, asked for me to come up with two topics for the discussion between the leaders of the Administration
and most of the larger student groups. After a wonderful dinner and pleasant discussion about law schools with two Associate VP’s of BSU, we entered discussion on the ways the Student Dedicated Fee is spent and the role of the Greek community at Ball State.

I was prepared for a volatile discussion about the fees, particularly the limited funding for provided for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Student Association. LBGSA presented us a report over the summer that has been described by even their supporters as “caustic.” They openly attacked SGA and UPB, two of their larger supporters, and said that we do not serve the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual community needs.

The report further attacked the Campus Activity Fund Board because they were denied the $22,000 they requested from CAFB’s $50,000 allotment to be divided between over 300 campus groups. The reason LBGSA didn’t receive a higher level of funding was because they didn’t respond to CAFB’s further questions sent through the mail.

The excuse presented by the leadership was that they were all in Washington for the gay rights march last spring and weren’t present to answer the questions. I find no pity for a leader that doesn’t allow for contingencies like checking the mail while a funding request of this magnitude is pending. No one would even entertain that excuse from me as the president of SGA, and neither should they as elected leaders.

LBGSA has planned a DivirsiDays week that SGA has not been invited to participate in despite our repeatedly expressed interest. LBGSA has felt it appropriate, however, to ask SGA for financial support for their portion of the programming. In reviewing our level of support for their programs, we have chosen to limit how much funding they will receive from us.

This has serious political ramifications, as it may appear to Joe Student that we have no interest in supporting all of our constituents, specifically the GLB students. To run away on a brief tangent, I question whether it is necessarily right for us to financially support a group, no matter if it claims minority status or not, when it treats us the way it did.

Surprisingly, LBGSA’s president didn’t speak once during the entire evening, on either topic. The Greek discussion went absolutely nowhere, and it felt very awkward because so few people at the dinner were willing to share their thoughts. If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn’t have spoken nearly as much, even if it means that there are awkward periods of silence, so as to allow others to think and for me to appear as if I was not the person in charge of the discussion.
Senate was, once again, uneventful. I just don’t really know what to think about it. We’re planning a training session in a couple of weeks to allow the newly elected Freshman senators to become acclimated to the jungle that is this year’s senate.

25 September - 1 October

This week was shortened a bit for me as I drove to a funeral of my girlfriend’s grandfather on Monday. He passed away Friday morning, and Annette (my girlfriend of a year) went home to Peru, IN that Saturday. I had planned to finally interview the three applicants for the Director of Diversity Affairs, an appointed position recently vacated in the Senior Staff, on Sunday afternoon.

She stated that I should do my work, because it was important, and that she would be alright if I stayed in Muncie. When I spoke to her on Sunday evening, however, I could tell that she needed me there for support. I made the determination that my work on Monday would have to wait until Tuesday and left contingencies for the many decisions that might need to be made due to it being the first day of Freshman Senator elections.

Important lesson learned: 20,000 strangers are not as important as family and friends, and that it is important not to neglect those around that you care about and accept that your time is limited.

I missed Hispanic Awareness’s kick-off on Monday because I was in Peru. Most of the week was preparing for our Senate meeting. Not only were we trying to get our proposed budget approved, we were also appointing a new member of our staff.

We had been meeting with the Senate Finance Committee for the last few weeks and made numerous compromises based on their concerns. I highly recommend that future administrations plan their budgets around the Staff’s expectations and goals.

We (the 4 execs) came up with our own proposals that were swelled and compared them with each director’s anticipated needs and goals for the year in a one-on-one setting during the retreat. This proved very helpful as we stressed that everyone needed to trim to fit within our $64,000 allotment.
Another key point of action in the week was our appointment of our new Director of Diversity. There were three applicants: the external VP of LBGSA, the former VP of the Black Student Association, and a very strong, positive transfer student from Florida A&M.

We initiated the interview by having the applicants read the section of the by-laws that pertained to their area, and then allowed them to ask any questions they might have. We based the interview on the duties dictated in our Bylaws and then a few role-playing questions to tap into a side of their personalities not covered in the regular interview.

We chose Wanda Singleton, the transfer from FAM, and then when I personally called the other applicants, I was greeted with a certain hostility. I really don’t like this part of the job, but it is appropriate for the president to make the call instead of the receptionist. Further, I was able to answer any questions they might have. The LBGSA VP, also a student senator, closed our conversation with, “Hmmm...Good luck getting her appointed tomorrow.” I was concerned with this one, because he has a strong following in the senate.

I knew that if the senate could see her perform like I did, they couldn’t even think of rejecting her nomination. I initiated the move by introducing her to the chair of the Diversity and MC Affairs committee and then having her sit in on the D&MC committee meeting prior to her nomination. This allowed for her to make an impact on their minds prior to the formation of any preconceptions based on their relationship with the executive branch.

I began the nomination by naming her, and then citing her interview answers to each of the bylaws questions. Further, I dropped a big bomb by informing the body that she was the only applicant to encourage our involvement with the LBGSA SAFE ON CAMPUS program. She responded to the body’s questions quickly and soundly and received a unanimous approval.

The day then flowed into a reception held for all of our organs of the SGA system and leaders within the university. I had particular pleasure in discussing our HIV testing planning with the President. He was interested in the proposition, but I could perceive that he was not in a position to endorse it, either.

The rest of the week went well, and I had the opportunity to view the samples of our Designated Driver cards this week. Our Student Safety Department has been working very hard to gain the sponsorship of Coke,
Pepsi and ten area drinking establishments. The concept: a student acts as a sober driver for his/her friends and receives free soft drinks from the establishments. Further, Pepsi and Coke will reimburse the establishments for whatever drinks they give away on this program.

Next week, we’ll be recapping our progress as an organization, and so the report will probably be just as long as this one.

2 October - 8 October

This week was spent taking a bit of a beating from the Daily News. On Tuesday, I met with Tina Carlin, the reporter assigned to cover our work as an organization. we discussed the work and progress we’ve made toward our platform goals. In fact, we talked for nearly half an hour as I referred to the journal our administration is putting together. (See the enclosed “Success Report.”)

The next morning, I read an editorial without a story claiming that we weren’t following up or through with our platform. Further, it drew a parallel with the Clinton administration saying that my “First 100 Days” is an equivalent to 25 here at BSU due to my term only being a year long. The editorial raised that I reportedly have my tuition waived because of my position. I could have fertilized Ball State’s prized orchid garden with such exquisite journalism.

I would venture that neither of these statements is true. In fact, my position pays whatever tuition equals minus all taxes and the DN Editor receives a tuition waiver, thereby making more than I do. FOR FUTURE PRESIDENTS: The reason we get paid as employees serve two major purposes: 1) it won’t affect our financial aid as a grant would and 2) we can use the facilities and vehicles as employees can.

The editor continued by claiming that we had done no follow up of our tour with the mayor. Each of these shots were taken in a manner that belittled our efforts at the home office and did little to bolster morale amongst the crew.

The next day, I found great humor in reading an article about how Mayor Dominick addressed the Senate on the same day as the editorial and spoke directly on the impacts our tour had made as the city planned and installed lighting in the municipal area. It also ran with an article, misleadingly entitled, “Promises not fulfilled,” that discussed the progresses being mad to fulfill our platform.
Maybe I’m a little too sensitive toward the whole press thing, but it’s just frustrating to work this hard and long and get kicked in the teeth because we don’t have our platform accomplished halfway into our term. I just don’t remember a president or Exec that has set as aggressive a set of goals to positively impact the lives of the students.

If HIV testing, book coding, recycling expansion, or recognition of MLK day alone happens, we will have made that impact. As I write this, the staff are working diligently toward these goals, along with a host of other projects.

I tried really hard this week to make affirming statements to everyone on the Exec and staff to build morale for the rough month of November just ahead of us. Papers and tests will wear everyone a bit thin, I think, so I will have to monitor this a little more.

I had been talking to the receptionists and asked how people generally looked as they entered the office. They all agreed that everyone appeared a little haggard, so I felt that maybe they needed a small break. Rowan and Laura were up for a Homecoming Royalty this week, and I canceled our staff meeting to allow for everyone to relax a little and enjoy the week’s activities.

I don’t now if it worked yet, but I need to remember not to ride too hard on them and forget that they are students first. LESSON LEARNED: receptionists can be a great asset in monitoring morale since you can’t be in the office at all times.

Next week is Coming Out Week, and LBGSA asked for SGA to pay for advertising in the DN without realizing how expensive their ads were. Their External VP stated that they had no money to pay for advertising, which I later found out to be false. The proposed bill totaled $820, just shy of one tenth of our ad budget.

I questioned why we should be expected to support them while the relations are still strained since their actions earlier in the year, and was told that I was being “petty” about the situation and that there would be no apology for their report.

I then stated that we would discuss their request and notify them by the close of business on Wednesday. Unfortunately, the deadline to submit their scaled down ad to run on Monday was also the close of business on Wednesday. Maybe they should have talked to us sooner.

The rest of the week was spent preparing the HIV proposal, meeting with some of the directors, and going to Homecoming activities. Laura was
crowned Homecoming Queen, and I am very happy for her and proud to call her my friend.

9 October-15 October

This week was rather stressful one, simply in that it was just so busy! We had some difficulty in working with the Senate parliamentarian, we experienced this year’s Coming Out Week, I met Timothy Leary and SGA hosted a reception for him, President Worthen addressed the Senate, Hunsaker resigned, the AAUP spoke out against Worthen’s proposed budget cut, I met with an instructor/academic advisor to discuss possibilities for a multicultural class for all BSU students, I met with the leaders of Feminists for Action, and explored problems within my Senior Staff. I found it a near miracle that I was still able to attend my classes somehow.

Tuesday was spent preparing for the staff meeting and participating in LBGSA’s Let’s Talk program where we discussed BSU’s affirmative action policy, and whether sexual orientation should be included. The was not there, and none of the material discussed showed up in the paper. Lesson learned: If the DN is not there, IT DIDN’T HAPPEN unless you aggressively point it out to them.

With all of these pieces flying around, I more fully realized the true worth of an hourly calendar and the tremendous assets I have in the office assistants who helped me to meet each of these demands. I have found over the last few weeks that, by breaking up my day into work time and appointment time, I can better meet the needs of both the staff and John Q. Student.

My appointment hours are no more than one half of my time in the office on any given day, yet are spread out enough to allow flexibility and availability to better serve my constituents. Even though I sometimes feel pretty weird in telling my fellow students to “set up an appointment,” I highly recommend this route to any future presidents because people will grab you to talk at every single moment you’re in the office.

I always try to make a point of keeping myself available to everyone, but it sometimes wears me pretty thin. I often find myself forcing a quiet, personal moment rather than blowing up over problems. This past week, I worked extra special hard at maintaining my composure in spite of serious difficulties with key individuals within the organization.
The parliamentarian is nominated by the President of the Senate (Rowan) and approved by the main body. We chose a man who we felt would best serve as a sort of bridge between the leadership of the Senate (who is primarily against our administration) and the Exec. If there was ever a mistake I made in this position, it was supporting his appointment.

Not all of the leadership of the Senate has been filled in about the LBGSA report, but this particular individual has, and yet tried to bring in an endorsement of the Coming Out Week through the Senate. I was out of the room during this whole discussion because of the AAUP meeting, which was unfortunate, because I have been prepared to publicly refute the organization’s stance. I have no malicious intent, but I have great difficulty in idly sitting by when statements like this have been made.

There are four types of statements that the Senate can endorse: amendments, bills, resolutions, and recommendations. The first two are internal actions, and the others are external. All but the last are subject to Presidential veto, because recommendations are simply the opinion of the Senate, but not binding statements of the Association.

The parliamentarian chose to see it fit to bring this endorsement out in the form of a recommendation because, as he told the Pro Tempore, "...because Adam would veto it." Now, he can do this legally within the body, but it really doesn’t demonstrate that he is the team player I once thought he was.

Wednesday was even more filled by President Worthen’s address to the Senate and the question/answer period about his mandated $3 million budget cut in which he emphasized the importance of raising teacher’s pay. A funny thing happened when he recognized me in the back of the room. He initiated a “Mr. President” greeting that I quickly returned to the amusement of the room.

After he spoke to the body, I left to attend the AAUP meeting that demonstrated the need for Worthen to better his communications with the faculty and that his top-down method just doesn’t work all the time, especially with the very strong informal organization that contains the faculty, but excludes any administration officials, to include the Provost. Many faculty resent that the Provost considers himself one of them, yet others like the symbolic efforts that try to demonstrate his involvements with them.

I had dinner with Dr. Worthen that night at the Leader’s Banquet, and briefly discussed the feelings I gathered at and after the meeting with
him. I think that I'll have to have a one-on-one with him as soon as possible.

Things are getting tight around the office, as time is scarce and people are beginning to waver in their dedication. Some I will have to become more strong with, and others I will need to lighten up on. Our platform is only a third done, and I'm getting nervous. I'll be giving my update to the Senate in two weeks, so I'll include it for you then.

16 October-22 October

Fall Break shortened the week up a bit, but we still managed to find some time to keep things moving along. Monday was spent visiting the IU Bloomington Law School, and reminding me that I really am just a student in a very unique position to immediately apply what he learns in his political science classes to his job. The people I met are big achievers from their respective institutions and I will join them in a new race on an entirely different track.

Meanwhile, on the BSU homefront, I took advantage of the break by getting on Dr. Worthen's calendar and discussed a couple of very volatile topics with him. I've made it a point to try to be diplomatic, yet firm in my relationships with the key administrators. I do, however, make sure I remain as polite as possible with the appropriate "Sir" and waiting to be seated until invited to do so in the office.

I've also tried to include Dr. Jones, our advisor, in most of my major concerns. Her position is that of an advisor, yet I sometimes consider what level our relationship should be on. I would sincerely like to become friends with her, but we've rarely seen eye to eye.

Further, one of my weaknesses is that I have a certain distrust of some administrators, and she is a member of the administration. I don't question her confidentiality, but I still don't quite feel comfortable yet.

The first concern I addressed concerned the Indiana Open Door Law and the BSU Board of Trustees. I was provided some information from a reporter from one of the local papers that might lead one to believe that the BOT is in violation of the law.

The law clearly dictates that only certain items of business may be discussed during the BOT's Executive Session. In studying my files of all the BOT agendas, the items for discussion have been exactly the same for the last three years.
A sensationalist might say that this group can’t possibly be only talking about litigation pending against the university or personnel decisions that are justifiably kept in private. A realist might say that they are clearly following the law, even if virtually all BOT decisions are made unanimously.

It seemed to me that somewhere in the middle of those two statements, one might find the real truth. I had been stewing on the situation for about five months, until I finally figured a safe way to approach it for us politically and effectively.

My approach was one of a concerned leader in the university community that had been apprised of a possibly damaging situation, and was sharing this “rumor” with the President. From where I sat, I couldn’t possibly know whether or not they were violation the law because I had never sat in on one of the closed sessions. Because of this, I knew that I couldn’t possibly make any accusations, nor did I.

I felt this to be the most appropriate method because if they were following the law, I would simply be conveying that a reporter and I had discussed it and reminding the BOT that the press was looking over their shoulder. If they were breaking the law, however, I was providing them the opportunity to make the appropriate adjustments to their procedures and avoid a potentially ugly mess for the university.

The second topic we discussed was a very different matter that dealt with the relationship he shares with the faculty. More specifically, we discussed the toll the $3 million budget cut is taking on the relationship.

Several faculty members had expressed their outrage that he was requiring them to count paperclips and paper costs when he spends such extravagant amounts on entertainment, lobbying, and an elaborate office. Further, I’ve gathered that some faculty question his leadership at the helm of a university because he has never been a FACULTY member, nor are his diplomas for teaching degrees.

I tried to politely stress that leadership must come from the front. If he hopes to sell the cut to the faculty, he needs to at least symbolically demonstrate his initiatives to make cuts within his own spending. Now, this may not be truly feasible to make equal sacrifices based on his role, but making the gesture first is a sign of true leadership. I hope he applies this principle that we learn as first year ROTC cadets: “Lead from the front.”

Another big happening this week was our involvement in the second
Annual Take Back The Night march and rally. I attended this march last year, and I felt that this activity warranted our support. We paid for their advertising and programs as long as we were recognized by the group with our logo on the ads. I was deeply moved by the presentations as I was last year.

During the presentation, a list of safety demands were presented to the administration, including installation of phone boxes, better lighting on and off campus, as well as sensitivity training for the police officers at our BSU department of public safety. I spoke very little at the rally, but I privately said, "We’re working on it." I’ll fill you in on our progress next week in the annual “State of the Association.”

23 October-29 October

"Beware the fury of a patient man"

My datebook’s quote of the week was very appropriate for my feelings regarding this group. The frustration level often wears at my soul. I need to explore how to better instill the importance of developing “subordinate leaders” in the committee chairs.

This I find very difficult as I try to balance my academics and be involved with the office with depth. I find increasing difficulty with keeping the other three Execs up to date with what decisions I’ve had to make without their approval.

It is virtually impossible to get all of us together in one place long enough to fill them in on the “piddly” things, much less discuss the hardest issues in depth. Each of us have a strong commitment to outside organizations that has given us a great deal of depth as a team, but it also stretches us very far apart.

It was almost like pulling teeth for us to all get together in one place. The North Central Accreditation Team visited the campus this week, and the four of us met with them to discuss SGA’s role at BSU. I tried very hard to let the others do most of the talking.

Such an event subjects you as the president to a weird pair of pressures. Although you should be as honest as you can to provide the best opportunity of growth for the school, yet there is an invisible pressure as ambassadors of BSU to put the best foot forward for any visitors to the campus. Our discussion Tuesday morning took more time than was expected and caused me to miss my 9:30 class. I have to be more careful...
of that situation if I expect to graduate in May.

The most significant part of my week centered around the annual State of the Association Address on Wednesday. My goal was to fill the senators in on the progress being made toward our campaign goals and to highlight some of my concerns about the way the senate is functioning. I've enclosed my speech outline.

SOA Speech by Adam Mildred

Intro: It’s funny that as I’ve sat through three of these as a senator that I never envisioned myself being up here and delivering this speech. My goal is to spur some thought and be succinct about it... you can grade me on that later...

I. Key points of progress on our platform
   A. Organization of the Week- footage shown weekly over Campus Report Card
   B. Safety
      1. Designated Driver cards are underway,
      2. Campus Police Relations Board meeting to address safety needs
      3. Waiver of tickets issued while using Health Center
      4. Funding for Take Back the Night program
   C. Environmental affairs
      1. Campus wide circulation of memo suggesting paper waste management
      2. Effort to restore kiosks for flyer posting underway
   D. Multicultural affairs
      1. Funding of Hispanic, Asian, and Unity Weeks underway
      2. “I Have a Dream” speech being made available over the VIS on MLK Day.
   E. HIV testing proposal has been sent off to Dr. Mikesell, Dean of Students
   F. The elections board chair is developing a handbook for future chairs
II. Goals for the body
   A. Leave a foundation for the next person to hold your position
      1. Leave records or a journal of your work to date
2. Prevent the reinvention of the wheel each year
3. Committee chairs should build up subordinate leaders

B. We need to ask ourselves before we get too entrenched in
INTERNAL matters if they are as important as seeking out our
constituent’s needs.

C. I foresee one very important internal issue: only one reading is
necessary for statements made outside the body and only one
day between passage by the Agenda committee and when it is
voted on by the body as a whole.

D. The Agenda committee must work to ensure that the rest of the
body is informed about pending legislation.

Conclusion: We must work together as one organization to promote a
better community for our constituents, and that we must be bold in
executing our duties because no one will do it for us.

30 October-5 November

Monday marked the beginning of Asian American Awareness Week,
and I attended the kickoff ceremonies in the Art Museum. My presence
there, aside from my own personal growth and exposure, was an important
move in the role of the SGA President.

I've learned that an active presence at the event displays significant
support for their efforts. Further, as financial contributors to the
programming, it is entirely appropriate to send a representative to the
events.

On a personal note, I learned an incredible amount from the Jude
Narita presentation. She performed a one-woman show that touched my
heart in a variety of places, angering me at times and soothing my upset
mid at others.

Because of my position, I found myself being invited to sit up with
the AASA’s leaders. I tried very hard not to draw attention to myself,
which I felt is very important since my role there was to support the
programming and not be in any limelight.

I canceled my staff meeting because of the dragging morale I
detected amongst the group. My hope was to allow them a little time off to
regroup their personal lives.

The four of us (Exec) met with graduate students involved with the
student affairs program, however. I felt less pressure to keep up a tight
lip with them regarding my feelings of frustration with the university’s governance system than with the NCA evaluators, and my comments reflected this comfort.

I explained that there was no real strength in the student’s voices unless they assumed that power. To assume such power is very difficult, because it requires an incredible amount of time to develop and understand how to wield it.

This includes manipulation of the Daily News, that bastion of professional journalism, and the exposure of your name and face to key administrators like the Dean of Students and the Vice President of Student Affairs.

It is very time consuming to accomplish these two objectives, and may take years. This is critical to my argument because we, as students, have a limited time to be here, much less to be involved in the student government. Further, it is only the lucky few that have the opportunity to cut their leadership teeth within this group. We need place more emphasis on keeping the freshman involved and allow them to grow.

6 November-12 November

This week was marked by some personal time as I observed my 22nd birthday and drove on with the program we volunteered to be a part of. One of the week’s highlights included the running of my second Letter to the Editor (LTTE) since matriculating in the fall of 1990.

A certain student senator submitted a LTTE last week that bounced around to various unrelated points and managed to offend several groups of people after publicly proclaiming his support of the KKK demonstration, claiming that the new Students of Native American Culture had dishonored him, and that he doesn’t care what other people think of him or his views.

I am a firm supporter of the First Amendment’s protections, but the difficulty lies in that he also proclaimed his involvement in our group as a representative of the students. His association of his statements and SGA did not better our image on campus and worked against our efforts to show that we are here to serve the student body.

After careful consideration, I responded with a statement that first applauded his efforts to communicate with his constituents and that such actions were in line with the Executive branch’s agenda. However, I clearly stated that his views were not those of the group and that I hoped
his constituents would hold him accountable for his actions.

This, it seemed, was the best action I had at my disposal. The forces acting upon my decision included the rest of the Exec’s opinion, his freedom of speech as both a citizen and a representative, a compelling interest to preserve the positive momentum SGA had developed in the public eye, and the extreme desire to publicly disagree with his statements as a representative of the student body.

After running my statement by the rest of the Exec for their approval, I informed the individual of the action. This, I felt, was the fairest move I could possibly take after deciding to submit my own statement.

A speech instructor once taught me that the true mark of a virtuoso diplomat is the ability to tell a person to go to hell and they look forward to the trip. This was my goal, and I felt quite good about it. The individual couldn’t be angry with me because I didn’t attack him or his statements. Rather, I had allowed the voters the opportunity to rectify the situation this spring.

Another important part of the week was meeting with the leadership of Campus Crusade for Christ, a very active religious organization on campus. They are sitting down various campus leaders in an effort to find out where the leaders were in their spiritual lives. It seemed that they were also prepared to witness to the leader if he/she was not already a Christian. I found it very good to sit down with fellow Christians and talk about the stresses and the loneliness that sometimes results from being in high profile positions.

For the next president: be prepared for religious groups that want to sit down and talk to you about your personal life. I had no difficulty because both students that talked to me were personal friends and that my beliefs coincided with theirs, but your religious values may not match up with the group seeking the attention of your position.

Such a situation may be difficult for you, but you must remember that with your position, you represent all students, not just the ones that think or believe like you do. I respect those people that are brave enough to subject their beliefs to public scrutiny, and will make an effort to actively listen to them.

Veteran’s Day passed by us with no significant recognition by the body nor the university community. How easy it is for us to simply forget those that have worked and died to allow the First Amendment to even be
discussed here in America. God bless our native land.

13 November-19 November

The active learning that I have experienced in this position has caused me to grow and deeper explore my personal motivations behind the decisions I make. The painful mistakes have taught me well, and I hope that I am smart enough to not make the same bad decisions in the future.

Over the summer, I appointed a task force of six students to explore the possibilities of including sexual orientation/preference in the university’s Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity statement. This action was in response to the request by certain members of the senate leadership to create an ad-hoc committee of people of one mind set.

I felt uncomfortable as the chief executive responsible for enacting the body’s statements because I felt the research would be very one-sided. Therefore, I requested the opportunity to create a task force made up of persons diametrically opposed in viewpoint. To avoid my influence on their research, I assigned my assistant to be the chair of the group and made it clear that I only wanted to know of their progress and wanted a report of their findings and recommendations by November 15.

It came to my attention on Monday that my assistant had been deliberately lying to me in regards to the status of the group. They had never met as a whole group, and the communication between members was nearly nonexistent. As a result, the senators who had deferred the issue earlier now wanted answers.

In the senate meeting, I was asked directly if I would support the action, and I refused to give them a response until I had the opportunity to discuss the matter with the rest of the Exec. and heard more discussion on the issue within the senate. The individual, who is the External V.P. of the LBGSA, had asked us a similar question during the campaign last March.

My response then was a qualified “yes”. The most important qualification then and now is that we need to properly research the potential impacts that could take place around the campus. It was my hope that the task force would have accomplished this very important facet of the issue. Unfortunately, the assistant did not live up to the performance I had anticipated.

Lesson learned: When delegating a critical task to someone,
personally ensure that work is being done to accomplish the mission well ahead of the due date.

Shifting away from the issue and toward some positive strides made by the group this week, I submitted to the provost my POLS 390 course paper on the possibilities for incorporating multiculturalism into the education here at Ball State. I interviewed the key players in the Provost's shop, an academic advisor, and the Assistant Director of the Office of MultiCultural Affairs, and it is my hope that we can develop this thesis for the betterment of the BSU community.

A difficulty has arisen in our funding of Jesse Jackson, Jr. as a speaker on MLK Day. We agreed to provide over 25% of his honorarium ($1600), and finally found out this week that BSA intended to spend SGA funds on something different because the Campus Activity Fund Board offered the full amount of the honorarium.

BSA found out about the CAFB funding around October 13, but did not inform us about this change. On November 9th, I found out about these plans. After consulting the execs, we chose to support the program based on their demonstrated need for this one speaker, in the amount of $600.

The ensuing uproar and claims of racism and the sort made me very bitter, which is a dangerous thing for me. That we had the money was not a consideration. Rather, it was the assumption that BSA could do whatever they wished with public funds caused great concern for me and the rest of the team.

I drafted a memo to the BSA president and sent him a contract with our amount to be pledged to the program. I accept responsibility for not committing to writing our involvement sooner, but the blame is to be shared equally on both parties.

I anticipate that the leaders of both organizations will be sitting down to negotiate soon, and I'll keep you posted.

20 November-26 November

Thanksgiving Break has greatly shortened the week for us in the office, but it hasn't been free of controversy. I felt compelled by the rest of the exec to take a strong stance with BSA regarding the whole funding situation. At the time, it was against my better judgment. I deferred, however, because they were in unison.
Monday, I met with the president of BSA to discuss our position. They feel that we are backing out of a campaign promise to promote the MLK holiday and breaking an agreement with their organization. We feel very taken advantage of because they had assumed that they could spend the funding in the manner BSA saw fit without clearly notifying us on any of the changes. The argument made against us is that we had not specified where SGA money was to be spent in a document form.

Lesson learned: get it in writing the second a monetary figure is mentioned to protect you against any difficulties or misunderstandings down the road.

I left the conversation open ended, allowing the BSA to approach us with any other requests for funding. I'll keep you posted about the situation.

Another difficulty that I've had to cope with is the position of my executive assistant. He has not shown his face into the office in an extended period of time. I've had the office assistants call his home at least three times a day in an attempt to reach him. He hasn't returned a single call.

I'm not sure if something desperate has happened in his life which might explain his absence or if he has decided that he would no longer like to be a part of the organization. If he could be reached, we might know his status and be allowed to make a decision. I'll give him the break, and then hunt him down myself, if necessary.

It has come to my attention that he has certain political interests in the spring, but his performance in a public position may reflect poorly for him. This will be critical for him as he considers running for one of the four exec positions.

Dr. Jones told me this week that 90% of decisions in a leadership position are personnel-related. I think I see what she means. Man, I feel drained. I hope that this break will let me recover for next week.

27 November - 3 December

"When all men think alike, then no one is thinking" - Walter Lippman

I lost my temper for the first time in this office this week. Rowan and Laura signed on as sponsors of the resolution that calls for the inclusion of sexual orientation in the AA/EEO clause of the university. I