

Report to the NDSA Board, September 4, 2009
By Tom Loosbrock, NDAA Senior Alumni Director

Recognize former Board members attending the meeting:

Ellen and Bob King
Dick Griffin
Marty Gleason

The initial inspiration for NDSA (ND's FIRST) came from Father Louis Putz, CSC. He encouraged increased, meaningful involvement of the laity in the Church and, after the learning and earning stages in our lives, he called on us to enter a returning phase to give back by serving others. The core principles from Fr. Putz remain with us today.

Recognizing the senior alumni resources of talent, experience, more available time for some, and the significant impact they could have by serving the University, Alumni Association and our communities, Gene Slevin (NDAA Board member), in 1996, proposed that senior alumni should become a recognized and contributing part of the NDAA. The organization was to be called ND's First.

Following a persuasive pitch to the NDAA Board by Paul Geary, Paul became the first NDAA Senior Alumni Director, which gave NDSA the opportunity to start engaging more effectively and to begin collaborative efforts with NDAA.

There was frustration in the early years. The mission seemed clear enough; however, it was difficult to establish representation in all regions, it took time to create and develop meaningful initiatives and the connection with the NDAA Board was not strong. Some observers began to wonder when the promise would become reality. That has all changed due mainly to the efforts of the boards in more recent years to improve NDSA's organizational structure, refine and clarify the goals and develop meaningful initiatives. And the relationship with the NDAA has significantly improved.:

Creation of a Senior Director position on the NDAA Board.

Dick Nussbaum (Past President of the NDAA Board) suggested that Paul Scagliarini look into Bat for the Cure. This gave the PACE program visibility, has involved ND clubs throughout the country and is an example of successful collaboration by the two boards.

Holly Colman, the President elect of the NDAA Board met with the NDSA Board during their winter meeting in San Diego.

A major part of the Hospital Support Program is now a part of Kathy Sullivan's Service and Spirituality Committee.

There are other examples, especially at the club level and with NDAA staff.

There continues to be a need for serious engagement with the NDAA and the development of collaborative opportunities. The new initiative, *Enhancing Senior Connections to Notre Dame*, will require that. And the effective implementation of all of the NDSA initiatives depends on interaction with the NDAA Regional Directors and the clubs. It has become essential that strong working relationships be developed with NDAA counterparts at all levels. It is important to not only make the connection with counterparts on the NDAA Board, but to make sure they understand the values of NDSA and the advantage of working together.

The creative and hard work by Jim Gibbons, Mike Squyres, Bill Kreps and Tom Monaghan has produced several documents that will have a major impact on the way NDSA functions as well as on its involvement with the NDAA Board and staff.

The restructuring of the Bylaws and Procedures Manual will enable NDSA to more effectively turn idealism and potential into action and reality.

The new initiative will help NDSA better understand senior alumni and their objectives, and will allow for improved senior alumni engagement. It will provide new opportunities for NDAA/NDSA collaboration and broaden senior alumni participation.

In addition, the financial analysis and budgeting procedures developed by Mike Squyres will provide for effective financial control.

The Executive Committee will meet with Holly Colman and Michael Wong (NDAA President and President Elect) at the conclusion of the meeting. It's interesting to note that they represent MAN (Minority Alumni Network) and Women -- neither of which is represented on the NDSA Board. This should be an objective as candidates are being considered for future ballots. The members of the 1976 class, the first with women, are now senior alumni and Debi Dell, '76 class president is now the NDAA Reg.17 Director.

Discussion topics will include:

Reorganization: Bylaws and Procedures.

The new initiative: *Enhancing Senior Connections to Notre Dame*.

Scheduling an NDSA presentation to the NDAA Board at the NDAA winter meeting or Senate.

Strengthening connection and communication between NDSA and NDAA leadership and at committee level.

Development of collaboration opportunities.

Agenda items for the November NDAA Board meeting:

1. Post Commencement:

Survey results are still being compiled.

12,000 surveys were sent to alumni, parents and friends to gauge the effectiveness of the University's engagement and communication with the ND family and to generate feed back about the 2009 commencement.

Fr. Jenkins and the administration will develop an understanding of the views expressed and the impact of commencement as the University considers next steps.

The Board of Trustees is to meet in October to review the survey results which are to be shared with the NDAA Board at the November meeting. During the meeting, the Board plans to meet and have candid dialogue with representatives from the Office of Strategic Planning and the Office of Public Affairs and Communication, and to discuss the NDAA call to action regarding life issues in support of University goals and programs.

2. Debi Dell's proposal for support for widows/widowers, separated and divorced. Although not an NDSA initiative, it will be of interest to many senior alumni. Interest has been expressed by the NDAA Connections Committee and by Kathy Sullivan's Spirituality and Service Committee.