SGA President aims to make senate the ‘voice of students’

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As president of the Student Government Association, senior Mary McMahon has a plethora of plans for this year and next, including increasing awareness of SGA’s resources and giving students opportunities to voice their opinions on University of Louisiana at Lafayette issues.

“My hope for this year is to go back to the mission statement of SGA,” McMahon said. “We want to make sure that we are fulfilling that statement in every aspect.”

McMahon said SGA is currently attempting to restructure its committees and encourages students to come to members with any problems they run into at the university.

“It's one thing for a student to issue a complaint to a department,” McMahon said. “But it is so much more noticeable if SGA is putting out a piece of legislation saying, ‘This is how the student body feels.’ Of course, it can also be the opposite. We can commend the university and say, ‘Thank you for doing this amazing thing, this is so necessary for students.’”

McMahon said becoming president was a big transition from serving as vice president last year. The main reason, she said, is because the vice president deals mostly with internal affairs as opposed to the president, who deals with mostly external affairs.

“Being president has definitely been more of an external position,” McMahon said. “You get called to serve on many different committees, you voice a student perspective on different matters and you get to serve at the Capitol for the council of student body presidents.”

McMahon added that her journey in becoming president of SGA was not as conventional as others’. McMahon said she first came to UL Lafayette with a substantial interest in student government; she loved the aspect of SGA having a voice on campus unlike the programming aspect of her high school student council.

When McMahon attended SOUL Camp as a freshman, she said she was in awe of how many of the people she met were from the Lafayette area. She said she recognized the potential they had as leaders. Being from Houma, though, she also found the homefield advantage discouraging.

“I thought to myself, ‘All these freshman know each other very well already. Why would anyone elect me, someone from Houma, Louisiana? Most of them probably have not even heard of that town,’” McMahon recalled.

“All that changed when I met someone who was a mentor on staff that year, though,” she continued. “His name was Dane Adams, and at that time, he was currently the president of SGA. Just talking with him gave me the boost of confidence I needed to run for SGA Freshman Senate. I ran with three people I had met for the first time at SOUL Camp, and by some miracle, all four of us were elected into Freshman Senate.”

The next year, McMahon served as a Liberal Arts senator, the chairman of the finance committee and the City University Safety Program liaison. These positions allowed her to see different aspects of student government at UL Lafayette she had never seen before.

This, McMahon said, is probably what drove her passion in wanting to run for executive office the next year.

“In the beginning, I wanted to run as treasurer because of how much I enjoyed the finance committee,” McMahon said. “But after talking to some people about it, I found that that wasn't exactly where my

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