Student council executives seek to create positive atmosphere

Student Council President Maggie Powers '20 and Vice President Bella O’Rourke ’20 are setting the tone for the 2019-2020 school year.

Raquel Lacusky ’20
Editor-In-Chief

Powers and O’Rourke have been working hard to bring a unique energy to Villa’s campus.

The exes value setting a fun-loving tone at Villa Maria but also recognize the importance of staying serious.

“We are just trying to bring everyone together and get everyone excited for the year,” Powers said. “We love having fun, but some of the stuff we talk about is serious, so we’re trying to be a happy medium.”

Providing students with the motivation they need to get through the year is incredibly important to Powers, but she hopes that students know they have support from the community.

“It’s going to be a lot of work. Keep putting [your] heads down and keep working hard because obviously you’re going to have good days and bad days,” Powers said. “Know that everyone is there with you.”

Powers and O’Rourke have had much success so far this year but did not reach their goals without a fair share of hard work.

“We’re trying to make Villa a happy atmosphere, so we spent a lot of time over the summer going through feedback boxes,” O’Rourke said. “We read everything that everyone said that they wanted, and we’re trying to make changes and incorporate what everyone is asking for.”

The two spent long hours on campus over the summer preparing to welcome the new class of freshmen into the community. The primary way they accomplished this, starting right from freshman orientation, was by giving them their very own “families.”

“We started something called squamilies instead of Big Sister-Little Sister. We paired all of the student council members with all of the freshmen and presented that to them on the first and second day of school,” O’Rourke said. Incorporating the freshman class into the community contributes to the sisterhood that makes Villa Maria so special.

Junior Madeline Ladd ‘21 applied for and received an internship at the Swimming World magazine. A swimmer herself since the age of seven, junior Madeline Ladd ’21 applied for and received an internship at the Swimming World magazine.

Olivia Karkenny ’20
Reporter

Junior Madeline Ladd ‘21 was the only high school student chosen nationally to participate in a Swimming World magazine internship.

“I had read Swimming World before and came across an article that said they needed interns for writing articles over the summer. I decided to apply and wrote an article about strength training and interviewed my coach for it,” she said.

After sending in her article, Ladd was accepted to be a summer intern.

"I applied on a whim and wasn’t expecting to get the internship," Ladd said. "I was one of the 20 people chosen and was the only high school student." Using an application called Wordpress, Ladd had to be professionally trained to write articles for the popular magazine. The training included many tips on how to write professional articles and how to publish them on the Swimming World website.

"After I accepted it, I received an email with details on how I would be trained to write articles." She explained that the whole experience was interesting.

She wrote about nine articles in total.

Some topics Ladd loved to write and report on were cliff diving, her opinion on the mental aspect of swimming, and dog diving. She conducted interviews through phone calls or in person for each article. She was even given the opportunity to work in event coverage; she reported on the scores of several major swim meets.

"My favorite part of the experience was definitely the opportunity to interview different people, such as national divers. I also think it improved my writing and gave me a lot of networking opportunities.”

For Ladd, writing articles for Swimming World magazine allowed for many new and exciting opportunities that many high school students do not usually get to experience.

"Other interns were from all over the world, including India," Ladd said. “It was amazing to interact with these people for our eight-week experience.” Ladd’s articles can be found on Swimming World’s website: www.swimmingworldmagazine.com/news.

After training, I was given the freedom to write anything related to aquatics,” Ladd said. “I wrote about nine articles in total.”

“College visits can sometimes be... interesting.”

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GET TO KNOW 2023

Who isn’t wondering how much sleep the freshmen get?

>>> page 2

WELCOME NEW TEACHERS

Learn about the four new members of the faculty and staff.

>>> page 3

SENIOR PUBLISHES BOOK

Olivia DiCicco’s children’s book is now available on Amazon.

>>> page 4
College tour FAILS

Visiting colleges is a major part of the lives of most juniors and seniors, but sometimes things don’t go quite according to plan...

I finished a tour and was leaving one of the main buildings. It was a quiet room, and there were a bunch of people in there studying for midterms. I was looking for the exit, and I guess I opened a door I wasn’t supposed to because a deafening alarm [started] blaring, and red lights [came] on. Literally everyone in the room [turned] and [stared] at me, and one guy [stood] up and [said], “Wow” and [started] slow clapping. Everyone [stood] up and slow [clapped], and I had to walk all the way back out of the room and go out the right door.

I was at a Catholic college and someone on my tour asked if they had a rabbi. It was funny, but the tour guide was polite about it.

I was visiting [university] when it started to DOWPOUR on us! Our group was miserably walking outside in the thunder, lightning, and torrential downpour without ponchos after the tour guide said they didn’t offer any. All of a sudden, we see the other tour group walk by happily wearing [university] ponchos given to them by their tour guide... Needless to say, the tour guide’s face was priceless!

I showed up two minutes late for a tour that I was the ONLY person on, and they left without me. They then wouldn’t give me another tour that day, and I had traveled all the way to California.

I was walking through one of the rec centers while I was on a tour, and I looked to my right when a volleyball slammed directly into my face. My face went numb, I got a massive headache, and for the rest of the tour, my guide kept apologizing to me.

I was on a tour, and the tour was going great, but then this guy from the back of the tour who said he was transferring to the school from who-knows-where started talking to himself. In one room, he put his briefcase on the table, still talking to himself, and started pulling stuff out of it and wearing his sunglasses inside. It was the weirdest thing ever.

I was at a college tour where the admissions presentation consisted of not a PowerPoint or a video but the admissions rep literally Googling information about the school.

“I think that because we’re the oldest and they are the youngest, we are able to transport ourselves back to freshman year. It’s not about, ‘Oh they’re the oldest, they’re the scariest.’ It’s about everyone coming together as one sisterhood,” Powers said. “I know we both formed a lot of bonds with a lot of freshmen that we probably wouldn’t have.”

While focused on bringing new students into the special sisterhood, the two execs are also looking forward to enjoying it themselves for their final year on campus.

“It’s our last year to just soak it all in and to see how hard we have worked over the past four years to get to this point,” Powers said.
Mrs. Jennifer Durkin Oschell ‘92

After taking time off to raise her three sons, Oschell is thrilled to be back on campus. Oschell’s new role involves interacting with alumnae like herself to maintain the connection between graduates, current students, and Villa Maria as an institution.

“[There is] a large focus on keeping our alumnae in touch with what’s going on with current stu-
dents and keeping them up to date and involved in ad-
vancing the mission of Villa Maria,” Oschell said.

So far, she’s been busy with events such as Villa Storms the Shore, the Mother Daughter Legacy Brunch, and Grandparents Day. Oschell hopes that events such as these will promote alumnae spirit.

“We are looking to try to build our alumnae participation as far as giving back to the school, not just from a monetary perspective but getting involved,” she said. “There are so many opportunities for mentorships... and just having people come back and getting to know the school is still very much how it was when we were here.”

This sense of giáo is very much intact, and that’s nice.”

Although she was the only one of her eleven siblings to attend school here, Oschell was an active participant in the community as a varsity ath-
te in field hockey, basketball, and lacrosse. One of her fondest memories, though, had nothing to do with sports.

Hearing whoever was named the soloist for [Oh Holy Night] at Carol and Ring,” she said. “That was one of my favorite memories.”

Oschell hopes that her connection to the Villa Maria community will allow her to excel in the Advancement Office and become even more active as an alumna herself.

Miss Bryana Natale

Part-time English teacher Miss Bryana Natale’s pas-
sion for teaching goes back to her childhood.

Hannah Rosenberger ’20

Part-time English teacher Natale hopes to bring energy and a positive attitude to the classroom. This energy partially comes from a feeling she’s had since she was young about her calling in life.

“I am an older sister, so...I always felt like a teacher. I was always trying to be a role model for my younger siblings, and I’d always help them with their homework,” Natale said. “My older sister and I had a desk [full] of our old books, and we’d always pretend to be teachers.”

Now that she is pursuing this passion as a ca-
reer, Natale is already striving to help her students better themselves in and out of the classroom.

“I want my students to leave my classroom with this new instilled confidence,” she said. “Believe in yourself. Walk a little stronger.”

One of the ways she’s accomplishing this goal is through an exercise she did with her Pub-
lic Speaking class, in which she decided to partici-
pate herself to help alleviate students’ nerves.

“I made my students do extemporaneous speaking, which is a fancy word for just speaking without preparing for it. Some of them were getting really nervous,” Natale said. “It was nice that I could kind of show them I understand that you have to be vulnerable to do this, but I’m going to do it too; we’re teammates in this.”

Before coming to Villa Maria to teach American Literature, Short Story, and Public Speaking, Natale taught at a variety of local schools, but she also has a passion outside of the traditional classroom setting: fitness.

“I teach a fitness class called Pound at a fit-
ness studio,” Natale said. “That’s a lot of fun.”

She didn’t stop there. When she walks on campus or off, Natale brings exuberant energy and passion to all that she does.

Mrs. Lorraine Benjamin

The Counseling Department added Administrative Assistant Mrs. Lorraine Benjamin to their ‘dream team’ of staff this year.

Alivia Orvieto ’20

Benjamin received her elementary education degree from Penn State University before entering the corporate world. After working as a principal’s secretary and in corporate environments, Benjamin is thrilled to be back in an educational setting. The philosophy, sisterhood, and Christian environ-
ment is what most drew Benjamin to Villa Maria.

“I just felt that, for this stage of my career, that this was the type of environment [for me],” Benjamin said.

“The opportunity at Villa presented itself, and I knew my skills and personal ideals would be a good fit [for the job].”

As the face of the counseling department, Benjamin uses many of the technological skills that she has developed throughout her career. Her job involves handling phone calls, scheduling visits with college representa-
tives, managing technical needs for the department, and acting as a liaison for the students.

“A lot of my role is to be a facilitator for information between this department and the young ladies that come to visit Counseling,” she said.

“[Benjamin] is excited to take on this new role this year as well, as she will keep a record of the seniors’ college acceptances to create the program for the honors coronation. Benjamin’s advice for the student body is to pursue education while young before responsibilities grow.

“Pursue your dreams and know they can become a reality,” she said.

Mrs. Lorraine Benjamin // Lifetouch

Mrs. Jennifer Oschell // Lifetouch

Villa Maria welcomes new faculty and staff

Miss Bryana Natale // Lifetouch

Sister Dolores Margaret

As Villa Maria’s newest IHM sister, Sister Dolores Margaret has already become a well-recognized presence.

Hannah Rosenberger ’20

As an instructor for music lessons, part of the Music Ministry team, and a helping presence during ensemble rehearsals, Sister Dolores Margaret has already become a well-recognized presence.

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**Villa Maria is 'anchored in love'**

For the 2019-2020 school year, Villa plans to remain "anchored in love" through monthly challenges, the Founders' Day celebration, and class bonding traditions.

**Julianna Prendergast '20**

__Reporter__

The theme expresses Villa's goal to remain in God's love so that everything the community does will bring new possibilities.

The Charism Committee plans to integrate this theme into the community this school year through monthly challenges and the Founders' Day celebration in November. The Faculty and Student Charism Committees will collaborate to bring the community together and remind everyone to work toward promoting love and kindness.

"Every month, the committee will come up with a challenge that we are asking the whole school to get involved with," said Matsinger. "We hope that the theme will be integrated into every class and that it will make a difference in the atmosphere of the school."

Another way Villa is working toward being "anchored in love" is through the new Freshman Anchor Day. This year, the Counseling Department began a new tradition of a class bonding trip for the freshmen during orientation. On August 29, the Class of 2023, the Counseling Department, and Student Council traveled to the Black Rock Retreat Center in Quarryville, PA, where they participated in team bonding activities. This included a low ropes course, archery, dodgeball, and laser tag.

"Anchor Day was one part of a full year of orientation for the freshmen class. The day allowed freshmen to get to know their classmates in a fun setting while sharing a new experience. The most memorable part of the day was seeing the freshmen together and connecting with," said Matsinger. "We hope that the theme will be integrated into every class and that it will make a difference in the atmosphere of the school."

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**A new look for lockers**

Through funds both raised from FEST and generous donors, the locker rooms, located in the Marian Center, were transformed this summer.

"Our leadership team decided to make the locker rooms the focal point for the summer. The locker room project was selected to be the FEST call from the floor, where we create a conversation for the parents and alumnae and solicit donations during the event," Director of Athletics Mr. Zeke Spillane said. The funds raised at FEST helped to cover the cost of the renovations, and the school operations budget, as well as generous donations from school supporters, picked up the rest. The maintenance team began the project shortly after school ended and wrapped it up in time for the new school year.

"We did not spend every day working on the locker room. As there were many other projects and, of course, regular maintenance to keep up with," Spillane said. "We did hire a few sub-contractors to do some of the work, and Mr. Zamponig even helped out with some of the measuring."

Taking this into account, the school's leadership team decided to make the locker rooms the focal point for the summer. The locker room project was selected to be the FEST call from the floor, where we create a conversation for the parents and alumnae and solicit donations during the event," Director of Athletics Mr. Zeke Spillane said. The funds raised at FEST helped to cover the cost of the renovations, and the school operations budget, as well as generous donations from school supporters, picked up the rest. The maintenance team began the project shortly after school ended and wrapped it up in time for the new school year.

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**Senior publishes children's book**

Olive DiCicco '20 wrote and published a children's book titled "Defying Destiny," which can be found as an e-book on Amazon.

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**Students spend summer at the beach**

Quincy Hatcher '21 and Meghan Meyer '21, like many Villa girls, spend their entire summers with their families in Ocean City, New Jersey.

Anna Heppelmann '21

__Section Leader__

Students discuss the pros and cons to spending their summer down the shore and share their favorite ways to spend the time with their families.

A current junior, Quincy Hatcher, has been spending her entire summer in Ocean City, New Jersey, for almost seven years. Hatcher and her family are very close to her next door neighbors at the beach.

She said, "Every weekend [my neighbors] have us over for lunch and we eat pork roll and cheese, and sometimes they'll have hors d'oeuvres for dinner. On the 4th of July or Labor Day, we'll all be there for dinner and bring little plates of [food] like meatballs."

Meghan Meyer, currently a junior, has been spending her summers in Ocean City, New Jersey, since she was four years old. Although she loves all three months, her favorite time to be at the beach is late June.

She said, "[Late June is] quieter, and I can do whatever I want with no one around, and I don't have to worry about summer work because the school year is still far away."

Hatcher also finds June to be her favorite month due to the slower pace.

"[June] is the start of the summer, there are less people, less renters, and it's more fun because summer's just beginning," she said. Hatcher found one drawback to staying at the beach all summer. Each year, she has a hard time adjusting when she returns to school. One downside noted by Meyer was missing her friends, but she typically doesn't get homesick.

"I get a little homesick for my bed, but nothing else. It feels like home down there," she said.

Both Hatcher and Tatche take advantage of the specific foods they get at the beach. Meyer works at Mallin's Homemade Sticky Buns and Hatcher loves Pizzini's pizza between their trips to the beach.

"I don't go to the beach every day, but on a weekend, I wake up early and my neighbors have waffles in the morning at 8 a.m. Then we go to the beach, then lunch, and then go [back] to the beach again," Hatcher said.

Hatcher never tires of the beach and loves the change of scenery.

She said, "In Pennsylvania, all year long I'm just surrounded by trees, so it's different when I go to the beach and [the landscape] is open. I just love it!"