



Mid-Year Update

December 15, 2021

2021-2022 Fall Semester in Review:

Fall of 2021 has been quite an eventful time for the St. Olaf community and in the world beyond The Hill. Returning to St. Olaf in the continuation of a global pandemic has taught us all the importance of flexibility and adhering to policies for our safety. The return of in-person classes, sports, and extracurricular activities has brought back much needed interaction and vibrancy to students, faculty, and staff. With this in mind, the Student Government Association (SGA) has retained its purpose of representing the interests of the St. Olaf student community and supporting student related affairs. The pages that follow recount some of the activities and accomplishments of each of the nine branches of SGA, Senate, and Administrative Team.

As the season is fitting, we would like to sincerely give thanks to the more than 250 people that serve on one of SGA committees, the 22 dedicated members of Student Senate, and our advisors who have made all the accomplishments of this organization possible.

SGA Administrative Team: Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by President Andy Nelson '23, Vice President Michael Paredes '22, Executive Assistant (EA) Meleah Chang '22, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Quinn Truax '23, Chief Technology Officer (CTO) Carter Schafer '24, Marketing and Communications Director (MCD) Meredith Williams '23

Please find below some of the actions and goals that the SGA Administrative team has advanced and revitalized this semester:

- This year we brought back the Fall Block Party which was an SGA-wide event welcoming back students with all branches sponsoring an evening of fun events, a concert, and an outdoor Pause dance.
- The Senate was elected on September 24th, 2021, with a voter turnout of 1100 Oles (~1/3 of the student body)- the highest turnout in almost a decade!
- Oleville, SGA's official website, has been updated to reflect the current happenings of SGA this year! The CTO and Oleville Development Team have maintained and updated in accordance with coordinators the following; membership, office hours, Ole the Lion Updates, and official SGA documentation of Senate meetings and bylaws. A survey alongside tabling in October gathered data of over 250 responses on what can be added to Oleville for the future! In response, there is now a resources page to Oleville, along with other redesigns and improvements
- During New Student Orientation, the MCD created a pamphlet that was distributed to all the first year dorms on SGA branches and how to get involved as a first year or transfer students! The SGA Marketing and Communications Team has been reimagined to include a team of three whose duties include poster creation for the SGA branches! A photographer alias was also created to photograph and catalogue the many programmatic and official SGA events throughout the semester!
- Ole the Lion received a facelift, and has a new email format that has been well received, though conversation for redevelopment of how to best communicate with students remains a main goal for the spring
- The President, Vice President, and Chief Financial Officer built the \$500,000+ operating budget, and had it approved by the Senate in October

Student Senate: Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by Michael Paredes '22, Senate Chair and SGA Vice President

Throughout the Fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, the St. Olaf Senate achieved the following:

- The Senate reviewed and passed the SGA budget of \$500,000 to fund branches and organizations for the academic year.
- Three of the four senate initiatives (Textbook Initiative, St. Olaf Task Force against Racism [STAR], GreaterThan) had their chairs appointed by the Senate and their budgets were approved for the academic year.
- The It's On Us initiative was converted into a subcommittee to review its purpose at St. Olaf.
- The Senate approved and created the Coronavirus Response Ad Hoc subcommittee for this academic year.
- A town hall, with panelists including the Registrar, the VP of Student Life, the Director of CAAS, and the Chair of the Faculty Curriculum Committee, was held to discuss mid semester grades at St. Olaf.
- The Senate passed a resolution to the St. Olaf faculty to implement mid-semester grading for all semesters starting in the 2022-2023 academic year. The resolution is now being drafted into a proposal and will be voted on by the Faculty Curriculum Committee before being voted on by the St. Olaf Faculty.
- The Senate approved SARN as the recipient of funds from the "Donate-a-meal" program.
- The Senate held a discussion on study spaces at St. Olaf, and is currently in conversations of extending hours in Rolvaag Memorial Library and other major study spaces.
- The Senate held a discussion on mental wellness at St. Olaf, and is in the process of investigating the effectiveness of current mental health support programs including the Counseling Center and Timely Care.
- The Senate approved a funding request for safety mirrors to be installed at major intersections in Buntrock Commons. This is being funded by the Senate's Projects and Capital Fund.

- Organizations that presented to the Senate during the semester include: SARN; the Task Force to Confront Structural Racism; Climate Justice Collective, and the Board of Student Media which includes The Olaf Messenger, KSTO, and The Quarry.

The Senate Subcommittees:

- The Audit subcommittee accomplished:
 - An examination into the overlap between ADC and SAC
 - A review of the bylaws of the ADC and SAC
 - An analysis of the logistical practices at The Lion's Pause
- The Bylaws subcommittee accomplished:
 - A review of the current SGA bylaws for accuracy and understanding.
 - The creation of two proposals to update the bylaws where needed. The first proposal was voted on and approved while the second is being voted on in the Interim.
 - The creation of a model for an SGA Policy Manual, to be completed in the coming semester.
- The Coronavirus Response Ad Hoc Subcommittee accomplished:
 - The monitoring of administrative implementation of subcommittee goals.
 - An examination of the reliability of students' vaccine self-reporting.
 - The creation of media to raise awareness on Covid-19 booster shots.
- The It's On Us subcommittee accomplished:
 - Discussions with key stakeholders of sexual assault prevention including SARN, the Wellness Center, and the Office of Student Activities.
 - Determination on the dissolution of It's On Us from the list of Senate initiatives.

After Dark Committee (ADC): Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by Sandra Chimutsipa '23, Coordinator

The After Dark Committee aims to provide late night opportunities for students to engage and enhance their experiences on the hill. So far, ADC has fostered community through various late night events as well as social media engagements. Our goal as a branch this year is to increase awareness of events among the student body by putting up events that enhance the social

experience of students at St. Olaf. We also want to increase students' engagement and our events have had really high attendance throughout the semester, something we hope to keep improving on. Our programming is a clear depiction of these goals in action:

1. Social media challenge: we started this year off with a social media challenge that was aimed to draw more students to our social media accounts as a way to ensure that students are well informed of upcoming events. This was a huge success as we gained a huge following
2. We were also able to host Pause Dances as a branch and in collaboration with other branches. These created a sense of community as we celebrated a variety of things.

Other Small events we put up include; Karaoke, Dessert in the Dark, and Decorate a Gingerbread house. Our goals for the remainder of the year are to continue building community through late night programming. We are also hoping that we can continue Pause Dances in a safe and enjoyable environment for all students.

Board of Regents Student Committee (BORSC): Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by Fenton Krupp '24, Board of Regents Student Observer

So far this year, the committee has:

- Attended the first Board of Regents meeting, offered student perspectives on long-term planning for the College. Following this meeting, we released a [report about it](#).
- Engaged students through a physical display about our work and a tabling event where anyone could chat with a BORSC member and offer their thoughts about the College.
- Regularly met with every member of the President's leadership team, relayed student concerns, and remained informed of current work of College leadership.
- Collaborated with the President and Vice-President of SGA to begin analyzing problems with and potential improvements to food service at St. Olaf. This work will continue into Interim and Spring with a student-led SGA task force that will work directly with the College and Bon Appétit.
- Met with College staff from the Counseling Center, Residence Life, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, and CAAS to better understand the College.

Our hopes and plans for Interim and the Spring Semester include:

- Developing presentations for both the Interim and Spring Board of Regents meetings. These presentations should address timely topics that are relevant to students and provide the Board with action items to help them understand how to improve our community.
- Conducting more interviews with Regents and increasing opportunities for students to share their experiences with the Board as well as with the President's Leadership Team.
- Connecting with more students to better empower them to be informed citizens of our community.

Diversity Initiatives Support Committee (DISC): Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by Mbuyisile Tlhwaele '23, Coordinator

DISC is unique in that we mainly fund 17 multicultural organizations. 2 organizations joined this year, Black Ensemble and POC Ole Theater. We support them by marketing their events, offering advice and assistance with event planning, and the likes. Some of the events we have been involved in include;

- ASU Boba Tea Sale which was raising funds to also support Black Women Speak, a non-profit organization based in Minneapolis that centers the voices of Black womxn.
- Presente Puro Pari was a celebration to celebrate the wrapping up of Hispanic heritage month and bringing back one of Presente's big events back "post Covid".
- Chinese Student & Cultural Communication Association Pre Final Food Therapy was to celebrate the end of semester for the CSCA members, and to treat them to some authentic Chinese food.
- Hmong Cultural Outreach Hmong New Year is an annual event for the Hmong community to become one, socialize, and celebrate the culture. The event includes courting ball toss, dances, pageants, musicians, rituals, food and many more.
- Celebrate South Asia Omkara. This is one of the big nights where we celebrate South Asian culture and get to share their culture with them. The event this year was also raising awareness and funds to support SEWA-AIFW which provides meals for Seniors & Victims

of Domestic Violence in the South Asian community who are unable to cook, lack funds, are living in shelters, and/or do not have access to the culturally specific food they require.

- KARIBU African & Caribbean Night. This is one of the big nights that celebrates the African & Caribbean identity and cultural heritage, with food, dance, music, and
- POC Ole Theater Amazing. This theater production is written & directed by Eugene Sandel. It is centered on the universal experience of the diaspora on hair and this is the organization's overcoming the juxtaposition of how AMAZING and gorgeous their hair is versus the way it is perceived.
- CUBE Bowling Event. This event was intended to provide a distressing event for the Black student body before finals. This was also to create an event off campus for the members and the larger community to come together and have fun bowling.

Music Entertainment Committee (MEC): Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by Lily Braafladt '22, Coordinator

This semester, MEC has held thirteen events, including our first in-person large-scale concert since Fall of 2019! We started the semester off strong with our events at new student orientation, where we sought to engage first years and introduce them to MEC as well as SGA overall. Then we hosted Bad Bad Hats as well as a campus musician opener for the Fall Block Party concert outside on Boe Steps. The concert was well attended by students throughout the night.





As the semester progressed, our live music events transitioned indoors and we hosted a fall-themed Open Mic Night with hot apple cider and Cage cookies. We had twelve student acts give performances that ranged from acoustic covers to stand-up comedy sets to spoken word poetry. Photos below show some of the campus musicians and bands that performed.



The month of October proved to be a packed month for programming, as MEC also helped to support SAC's Homecoming Week, put on the Haunted Pause Halloween Carnival, and

announced the Fall Concert Artist Duckwrth and held a contest with clues for students to guess who it might be. MEC's Homecoming event was called Ice Ice Baby and involved pizza and ice skating along with MEC members' DJing skills. MEC played the largest role in organizing events for the Haunted Pause Halloween carnival, as we hosted the majority of events with our Tarot Card reading booths and night of Campus Band and student org performances. Tarot Card readings were a hit with students, and the line for readings was out the door from start to finish of the night. MEC also hosted and coordinated D-VINE's first dance performance of the school year at the event.



After October, The majority of MEC programming went toward our first large-scale concert in two years which took place on November 12th. We sold tickets to students and worked with Duckwrth and his team to provide a safe and successful Fall Concert. We were overjoyed with students' compliance in wearing masks at the concert, ensuring COVID safety for all those in attendance.



After Fall Concert, MEC hosted a variety of more small-scale music programming events for the rest of the semester. We also spent hours posing, vetting, and negotiating with possible artists for Spring Concert during this time. Some of our events included the Campus Musicians Social, the Album Recreation Contest, Music & Meditation, and a Finals Self Care Giveaway.

Political Awareness Committee (PAC): Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by Aya Aboudou '23, Coordinator

PAC this year has achieved a lot especially with a hard and late start. We were able to:

- Welcome 15 new members, most being freshmen.
- We have organized a series of speaker events by first inviting Rashid Khalidi, a Columbia Professor and author of the “Hundred years war on Palestine” which was the topic of his virtual talk at St. Olaf College.
- Another speaker we have hosted is Charisse Burden-Stelly, a Carleton Professor and her topic was “Capitalist racist society, the Black scare and the Red scare”.
- Along with organized speaker events, PAC has programmed different events from discussion tables to movies. We have worked hard to provide a space for our St. Olaf community to share and discuss ideas, raise awareness on important global issues and create a safe space for students and staff to express themselves.

Student Activities Committee (SAC): Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by Zoe Golden '22, Coordinator

The Fall semester has been incredibly busy for the Student Activities Committee (SAC)! We have focused on reviving pre-covid events, in addition to creating new and exciting opportunities for St. Olaf students. Between SAC's four subcommittees— film, superfan, special events, and off-campus— we planned and executed just over 30 events this semester. According to Presence, SAC saw just over 4,000 participants at our various events!

Our first large-scale event of the year was Homecoming week, themed Y2K Today. Last year, homecoming was mostly virtual, distanced, or outside. This year, we were able to resume in-person events and bring back many fun traditions! We hosted trivia, just dance, crafting, in addition to Champion of the Hill and the Homecoming Pause dance. Approximately 1,500 students participated in our programming, bought a shirt, or attended the first Pause dance since Covid!

Beyond Homecoming, we put on a variety of events. Small scale campus events like grocery bag bingo, pumpkin smashing, pumpkin painting, and wellness day. We also worked to bring fans to support athletics through events like Putt-Putt in Bunt, tabling with the Cross Country teams, and soccer shootouts with the Men's team. Off-campus provided bussing to the Northfield farmers market, tickets to a Gopher game, and paid for students to go bowling in town. Finally, the Film committee brought back weekly movies in Viking theater, supported the campus streaming service (SWANK), and fostered ticket sales to movies at Canon Valley theater.

Finally, SAC focused on collaborating with multiple orgs and other programming branches this year. SAC worked with ADC and MEC during Homecoming week and continued that collaboration for the St. Olaf Spooktacular. For the Spooktacular, SAC also collaborated with the performing groups Red Brick (formerly Myswyken) and InBlack for some ~haunted~ acts! Harry Potter night was another large-scale event that featured other St. Olaf orgs. We worked with the Wellness Center, OUTs, College Dems and Deepend!

SAC has had a most productive semester and looks forward to hosting more events in the future. Be sure to follow us on Instagram, @stolafsac, for more information about Match-o-Matics, President's Ball, and much, much more!

Student Organizations Committee (SOC): Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by Jess Hollister '22, Coordinator

SOC has enjoyed getting back into the swing of things as students have begun to form new clubs and start participating in organization events in-person! We hosted a Co-Curricular fair within the first two weeks of school in which over 160 student organizations participated, and all 9 SGA branches held a presence at this event. Over the course of the fall, 10 new student organizations were recognized with Presence pages, and we funded \$10,043.78 to general organizations and \$8,467.20 to recreational club sports and nationals funding. We used 26% of our budget, and are on track for the spring. SOC had 12 members this past fall, 3 of which will not be on the committee in the spring, so we will hopefully be opening up applications soon for a few more vital roles. We are working to shift our Oleville page to be more transparent about the guidelines for how we choose to fund organizations in different ways, as well as a document for all of campus to see how we make our decisions about recognizing organizations each week.

The Lion's Pause: Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by Sannah Arvidson-Hicks '22 and Nathaniel Chi '22, Co-Coordiators

So far this semester, the Lion's Pause has achieved the following:

- we employ over 100 students in the pause and 15 managers
- we've been working with a shake new flavor company to bring you new flavors and creative combos for interim and spring semester
- we are starting pause events back up now that some of the covid related concerns are done such as video game and pool tournaments
- we hosted the first indoor pause dance since March 2020 this semester
- we revamped and are still revising the Pause reservations system
- we've set pause hours at 5-12 daily with Tuesday/Thursday lunch and hope to open daily for lunch in the spring
- We've had nearly 120 events, or over 100 events in the pause this semester

Volunteer Network (VN): Mid-Year Summary

Prepared by Camille Stich '22, Coordinator

Here are some highlights of the Volunteer Network so far:

- Tabling at the co-curricular and getting people to sign up for the volunteer email alias
- Sending out two volunteer newsletters that give updates/information on volunteer organizations on campus and volunteer opportunities
- Everyone on the team completed org essentials
- VN's oleville is all up to date
- Hired 4 new freshmen representatives
- Had a team bonding at Feed My Starving Children
- Hosted Boo Bags which created Trick or treat bags for the Children at Halloween for Kids
- Putting on Halloween for Kids, where we had various kids from Northfield come to the Pause Mane Stage to play games and win prizes/candy. Games we had included:
 - Rope maze, Photo Booth, Slime making, Candy fishing, Spider Velcro throwing, Pumpkin painting, Simple obstacle course
- Funded two volunteer organizations (SARN and Northfield Notes)
- Checked in with volunteer organizations, made sure they were running, that they knew they could ask us for funding, what events they were putting on, etc.
- Paws for Finals; bring in 20 dogs into the Pause Mane stage to help destress students on reading day

Volunteer Network Future Goals/Plans:

- Have the freshmen representatives make a volunteer interest form that people can fill out, and we can match them with the volunteer organization that would best suit them
- Small volunteer fair in January
- Helping out with spring fest
- Second paws for finals in spring

- Better accountability system for updates by volunteer organizations so VN's program advisors are updated in a timely manner on what is happening in the volunteering community