From the Parents Chairs

Welcome to our new and returning parents. By the time you have had the opportunity to review this issue, the fall semester will be nearly over and your son or daughter will be returning home soon for the holiday season and semester break.

For the last two years we have been active in many parts of the Assumption community. We became involved in the Parents Committee when our son was a freshman and it has been a great opportunity to meet many faculty and staff and fellow Assumption parents.

This dedicated group of people directly contributes to the development of the students’ and parents’ Assumption experience and we have enjoyed every minute. As a result of our experience we enthusiastically accepted the opportunity to co-chair the committee when we were asked to do so in 2008.

As Parents Committee members, we volunteer our time to assist the Offices of Career Services, Annual Giving and Admissions. Our experience is highly rewarding and we strongly encourage you to become involved.

Sincerely,

Cindy and Paul Prete P'10
Co-chairs, Parents Committee

SGA building tomorrow’s leaders

When senior Hugo Jury set foot on campus three years ago, he hoped to someday become president of the Student Government Association (SGA). After three years as a Class senator and highly involved student, he has achieved his goal.

“My fellow members of the [SGA] executive board and I know that it is a privilege to be an executive and a remarkable opportunity,” he said.

The SGA represents all full-time undergraduates, providing an opportunity for all students to actively contribute to the academic and social climate of the campus.

SGA members (president, vice presidents, class officers, and eight senators from each of the four classes) are elected by the student body through a one-day online election, according to Eric Swindle, director of student activities and SGA advisor.

Those vying for election may give a public “campaign speech” a couple weeks prior to the election, which is taped and broadcast on the campus cable TV station, ACTV, several times in advance of the election.

The student senate meets weekly to discuss and address issues of campus concern. Meetings are open to all students and Assumption community members.

The senate is conducted by an executive committee comprised of the president, one vice president each for student, academic and financial affairs, and the senate speaker. They serve as the primary SGA liaisons with the faculty, staff and administration. Jury said, “We help facilitate debate on campus, bringing student issues and concerns to the administration. We foster the debate, but don’t participate in it.”

According to Jury, SGA members gain public speaking, communication, organizational and conflict management skills, while building confidence, and gaining knowledge about the College and how the governmental process works. “SGA attracts high caliber students, those who are willing to be active members for change in the Assumption community and good citizens,” he said.

College prepared for H1N1 and seasonal flu

Assumption has a plan in place to handle the flu season, which is working effectively. To date, only a handful of cases have been reported on campus. The College is working closely with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to monitor flu conditions.

Seasonal flu vaccines have been offered and the H1N1 vaccines will be offered when available. Students should talk with their health care providers about whether they should be vaccinated for the seasonal and/or H1N1 flu. People at higher risk for 2009-10 H1N1 flu complications include people with chronic medical conditions (e.g. asthma, heart disease, diabetes).

Most cases of H1N1 in the U.S. have been relatively mild, with symptoms of primarily fever, headache and body aches along with respiratory symptoms which may include cough, nasal congestion and sore throat.

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Q&A: Linda Mularczyk, director of financial aid

What is your role in financial aid?
I help students and their families identify and apply for resources to afford an affordable education.

What amount of Assumption grant dollars did the financial aid office award this year to students?
The College awards both merit and need-based financial aid. For the 2009-10 academic year, the College awarded more than $23 million to eligible students.

Some families may feel that they don’t qualify for aid. Should they apply for financial aid anyway?
There is no specific family income cut-off to qualify for financial aid. Other factors considered include family size, age and number of family members in college. Eligibility is determined by a complex federal formula and income is not the single determining factor. Although income can affect the awarding of need-based grants, many other financial aid options are available regardless of income level, including merit awards, loans and work-study opportunities.

The financial aid office at Assumption is staffed with dedicated professionals that will help you navigate the financial aspects of a college education. We work hard to make sure that students who come through our doors have access to funds to help them attend Assumption.

Your office awards Federal, State and Institutional financial aid to students. What other services does your office provide?
Each student is assigned a financial aid counselor that will work with the student and family throughout their time at Assumption. Our office also runs the student employment program. Students who work while attending college often develop strong time management skills. The experience our students obtain will prepare them for the workforce after college.

What is the most rewarding part of your job? That occurs when I see the students who were once incoming freshmen walk across the stage with diploma in hand.

Students welcome campus dining upgrades

Sodexo, the College’s food services provider, has made significant changes to both Taylor Dining Hall and Charlie’s Cafe this semester, in addition to tray-free dining. Taylor’s new changes include an isolated allergen-free pantry kitchen, called My Zone and an “action” serving station with varied daily offerings. There is also a meal-to-go option, enabling students to pickup their meal in a reusable eco-friendly meal container with a minimal deposit.

Lastly, those looking for healthy choices can take advantage of “The Balanced Way,” where predesigned meal plates have fresh healthy choices geared to 600 calories, low fat, and a balance of vegetables, carbohydrates, and protein. The changes to Charlie’s include the removal of the salad bar and addition of a new “Toss” station adjacent to the grill, which sports an updated menu but preserves some of the classic entrees previously available. Grill orders are placed at a computer kiosk, which dispenses a ticket number while patrons wait for their number to be electronically displayed when it’s ready. Updated deli offerings are supplemented by the Global Adventures station, offering varied international specials.

“The transition at Taylor has been smooth,” said Mike Ward, Sodexo’s general manager on campus, “and we’re working out some issues. We anticipate that the changes at Charlie’s will be embraced by the community as they get used to the new system.”

SGA builds leaders

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“Assumption places great responsibility upon its students to participate actively in the life of the College.” Jury explained. “It is this responsibility that grows into a deep pride for the College.”

The fruits of SGA’s labor are visible on campus. Last year Assumption began its Green Bikes program based on an initiative by former SGA president Kathy Hartigan’09. The SGA and Plourde Recreation Center (PRC) financed the purchase of the bikes, helmets and locks. Students sign one of the eight bikes from the PRC.

“The Green Bikes were extremely popular during their first year,” said Scott Butch, assistant director of recreational sports. “More than 250 different students used the bikes and they were signed out more than 400 times in 2009-10.” Students typically ride them around campus and the local community, but have also ventured to visit friends at local colleges, Butch indicated.

The most significant change to campus life is a switch to tray-free dining in both Taylor Dining Hall and Charlie’s Cafe this semester.

This environmentally-friendly initiative helps reduce the use of washing chemicals, water, energy use as well as a reduction in food waste, according to Mike Ward, Sodexo’s general manager on campus.

“I work closely with SGA through its Dining Subcommittee,” Ward explained. “We meet monthly, share a productive exchange of issues and turn their ideas into an action plan. As a result, in addition to going tray-free, all of our plastic cutlery and meal packaging is now bio-degradable and we’ve extended our hours in Charlie’s, both of which came about via SGA. I appreciate the students’ candor and truly enjoy working with them to improve our services and operation.”

For more info about SGA, visit www.assumption.edu and click on Campus Life, Student Activities and SGA.

Visit Assumption online at www.assumption.edu
Among the many services and programs available to students through the College’s Office of Campus Ministry is the Send Service Immersion Program. SEND (Servicing people in need; Exploring new places and cultures; Networking with others; Discovering more about self and others) offers students a unique opportunity to put their faith into action. For the past 25 years, students have traveled during the winter, spring or summer breaks to either Mexico or eight United States locations to work with people in need. The program, open to all Assumption students, is so popular that there is often a waiting list. Last year, about one third of the applicants had previously participated on a SEND project.

The program is more than a one-time service project for students to participate during school breaks, but rather a year-long educational experience of understanding the community they will be traveling and the culture/socio-economic standing of the people to whom they will be helping. Students are required to reflect upon who they met, the services they provided, how it affects their faith life, and what they should do with the experience once they return to Assumption.

This spring, Amy Logue ’01, assistant director of annual giving, volunteered as an advisor and led 11 students to “Mission on the Bay” in Bay St. Louis, MS, where they helped restore a home that was severely damaged by hurricane Katrina.

The trips allowed the group to see firsthand the effects of the hurricane and to hear the horrifying stories from the local people. At first, the students were nervous that they could not perform the tasks that were being asked of them. However, by the end of the week, the students were taking ownership of their tasks, and not leaving their projects unfinished. Amy acknowledged that they all went on the trip knowing what they were doing was good, but it turned out that they received just as much in return from the experience as they gave to it.

A few weeks after the trip, SEND participants had a final meeting where they shared their answers to three questions:

1) What did you leave at the site?
2) What did you take with you?
3) What will you commit to because of the experience?

College prepares for H1N1 and seasonal flus

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To help prevent the spread of these illnesses students are encouraged to take the following measures:

Washing hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand cleaners are recommended to control contamination. All restrooms throughout campus are equipped with antibacterial hand soap and nearly every building on campus has either a free-standing or a wall-mounted alcohol-based hand cleaners in lobbies and/or high-traffic areas.

Students are encouraged to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Coughing or sneezing into an elbow or shoulder is another option. Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth; germs are spread this way. Know the signs and symptoms of the flu. All students were provided with a disposable thermometer to check their temperature if they feel sick.

If a student becomes sick, he/she should call Student Health Services at 508-767-7329 (x7329) or call Public Safety at night or on the weekends.

Students should call their professor or Dean Eloise Knowlton (x7486) and stay in their room or go home if they have flu or flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever. For info visit www.cdc.gov or www.assumption.edu.
Parents Fund grows for the fifth consecutive year

For the fifth consecutive year, the Parents Fund has set a new record for giving, topping out 2009 with a record total of $181,848 with 33% of parents participating. The Parents Fund is a component of the Annual Fund.

This tremendous level of support is a testament to the confidence parents have in the educational experience that Assumption provides. All Assumption parents can be proud of how our collective support makes an impact. Support of the Parents Fund has been fundamental to a transformation that includes smart classrooms, renovated residence halls and common rooms. It also helps provide financial aid and supports student activities, athletics, campus ministry, the library, Safe Ride Program and more. The Assumption community extends a heartfelt thank you to the parents who participated last year.

The Fund’s fiscal year runs from June through May and gifts are tax-deductible for the calendar year in which they are made. Please consider using the enclosed envelope to join other parents in support of the 2009-10 Parents Fund. To give online, visit www.assumption.edu and click “Give a Gift.” Know that your support, at any level, will be greatly appreciated.

The Parents Committee serves an important role in the Assumption community. Committee members act as ambassadors of the College by volunteering to answer questions of prospective parents during Accepted Students Day or hosting regional parent receptions for the Admissions Office. Some parents participate in the Career Networking Dinner and/or the Alumni/Parent Job Shadowing Program.

For more information, please contact Deb Konicki P’08, director of parent programs at 508-767-7401.

2009-10 calendar

Nov. 25-29 .......... Thanksgiving break
Dec. 9 .................. Last day of classes
Dec. 11-17 .............. Final exams
Jan. 19 .................. Classes begin
Mar. 8-14 ............... Spring Break
Apr. 1-5 ................. Easter recess
May 3 .................. Last day of classes
May 5-11 ............... Final exams
May 15 .................. Commencement

For the full College calendar, visit www.assumption.edu