

# DECISION 2012



MAC HUGIN • NICOLE ARATA • DAVID SOLED

On Friday, March 9th, the junior class selected the three candidates for Student Body President for the 2012-2013 school year. Speeches were held on Monday, March 26th, and the vote will be held on Wednesday, April 4th. Who will you choose?

## A Letter From the Commander-in-Chief: Marisa Werner Reflects on Her Year in Office as Student Body President

By **MARISA WERNER (VI)**

Over Spring Break, I was asked to write a reflection about my time in office, but I simply didn't know where to begin or what I should focus on. Being forced to think about my time in office, I realized that this year has flown by.

To this day, I can vividly remember walking into school the Monday following Spring Break, holding my speech and baked goods. My hands were trembling and my stomach was twisted in knots. Then the time for morning meeting finally arrived. Delivering my speech in front of the entire Upper School was one of the hardest challenges I faced while attending Pingry, and it was also one of the best decisions that I made during my Pingry career.

My first assignment as Presi-

dent was to plan Spring Fling. I understood that this event would set the tone of my career as Student Body President, and I wanted it to be different from the usual school events by creating a setting that was inclusive and welcoming to all students. We decided that the theme should be a highlighter rave. This event took a tremendous amount of time and organizational effort, and I would not have been able to do it without the help of everyone on Student Government.

Everyone always says that in order to succeed in life you need to work together, or that there is no "I" in team. I know those sayings seem super cliché, but after serving as President, I can honestly attest to all of those platitudes. For all the events that we plan and for everything that Student Government does, it is a collective effort. It has

to be or the events would not come together. Student Government does not only consist of its members and officers, but rather encompasses the whole Pingry community. For this reason I would like to thank everyone who attended any of the events sponsored by Student Government and all the faculty members, especially Dr. Jones and Ms. Olesky, who served as chaperones.

Pingry has provided me with outstanding resources and is an environment that has given me the opportunity to become a leader, an opportunity for which I am forever grateful. As Student Body President, I have been able to utilize my passion for bringing together and leading students of different backgrounds and interests, while serving as the liaison with faculty and administration.

This year has been filled with many ups and downs along with many stressful and rewarding moments. I firmly believe that this job has really changed me for the better. I have learned that not everything in life can be planned and organized ahead of time. Sometimes things don't turn out as planned and you need to act in response to it and not worry about it, because honestly everything will turn out fine.

I remember while we were decorating for Homecoming this past year, a few of the main pieces that were going to be used for decoration were never delivered. At that point, I was kind of freaking out, but all the representatives and officers who were there to



live, laugh, and learn together as a community. I hope that everything I have done or tried to do while in office has followed my objective. All in all, I have absolutely loved my time at Pingry, especially my senior year. I would not have traded my experience at this school for any other. Serving as Student Body President was one of the best gifts that the Pingry community has given me and I am forever grateful for this opportunity.

I hope that I have been able to instill my love for Pingry in others, and I truly

## Commentary: How Student Government Leaders Can Improve Our Time at Pingry

### Updating Classrooms for a Modern Student

By **ALYSSA BAUM (IV)**

For the past few months, many of my favorite shirts have gotten a series of very small holes in the bottom right corner. My aunt and I were brainstorming what the source of the holes could be. She thought maybe my dog had bitten them or moths had gotten into my closet, but those ideas seemed unlikely, as the holes are in the same place on all the shirts. Another possibility was that the shirts were getting caught on my belt buckle, but this couldn't be the problem because I don't always wear a belt with these shirts.

When my aunt asked if there is anywhere my shirts could have gotten caught, it finally hit me — the desks in some of my classrooms. In many of the rooms in the 200s wing and the 400s wing, the desks are old, wooden and rough on the edges. It therefore makes

perfect sense to me that the holes in my shirt would have originated from the desk in my History classroom because the desk's surface emerges from the right side of the chair.

In addition to the personal inconvenience from the desks, some of my classmates and I feel that some furniture in the classrooms is outdated and impractical given the modern options available to students today.

I bring my laptop to school every day, and in many classes, I like to have it out on my desk along with my notebook — but I feel like I'm in a balancing act, steadying my computer, notebook, pens and handouts on my desk and lap.

The desks in many of the classrooms are impractical for today's modern student,

**PINGRY DESKS:  
SO UNCOMFORTABLE,**



**YOU'LL NEVER  
FALL ASLEEP  
IN CLASS AGAIN!**

and I think that a simple change in furniture will have a positive impact on students' classroom performances. A more practical and comfortable learning environment will enhance communication among students and help to stimulate a more active learning environment.

According to a January 20th New York Times article called "What You (Really) Need to Know," which discusses the fact that leading universities do not continue to adapt to the changing technology in the classroom effectively, "Active learning classrooms" — which cluster students at tables, with

help decorate started thinking of other ways. We ended up constructing a cool, ocean-like entrance that received many compliments.

In my Convocation speech this past September, I stated that my main objective would be to

furniture that can be rearranged and integrated technology — help professors interact with their students through the use of media and collaborative experiences."

In the past few years, Pingry has renovated the middle school, resurfaced the clock tower, redone the roof, renovated the library,

appreciate all the love and support that this community has demonstrated for each other and for all the actions that I have undertaken as President.

Thank you!  
Love,  
Marisa

bought new couches for common space, redone athletic fields, and most recently redecorated the faculty lounge. Students spend almost seven hours a day in the classroom: updating the upper school classrooms should be very close to the top of Pingry's renovation list.

## Inside The Record

### The Melting Pot

Kasia Axtell (V) argues for the benefits of a mixed-grade advisory system. **P. 2.**

### It's a Dog Eat Dog World

Sophomore Ben Kaminoff wonders how our competitive natures are hindering the community. **P. 2.**

### In Their Own Words

Juniors Nicole Arata, Mac Hugin, and David Soled introduce their election campaigns and goals for 2012-2013. **P. 2-3**

### Election Chatter

Students share their concerns and hopes for next year's Student Government agenda. **P. 4**

# Commentary: How Student Government Can Improve Pingry

## Fighting Our Competitive Natures

By BEN KAMINOFF (IV)

As Pingry students, we all work hard to succeed in each of our endeavors, whether it involves something inside or outside the classroom. I would like to presume that we not only work hard for our own individual success, but also to help everyone in our community succeed as a whole.

However, there is unnecessary competition embedded in many aspects of our school's culture. Pingry's initiative to promote "Excellence and Honor" seems to define the root of the problem. Many members of the community feel that the only way to be "excellent" is to work harder and better than everyone else.

Recently, this came to my attention before taking a Chinese test. I asked a person in my class who was studying

if they had made flashcards. Before I even asked to look at them, the individual immediately declared, "These are my flashcards." This act really bothered me because the individual immediately became competitive with me, despite me making a completely harmless request. I know that we both wanted to do well on that test, but why couldn't we study together?

I know that I am not the only one who has witnessed or taken part in unnecessary competition. Students often ask one another how they did on an assignment or what answers they were unsure of on a test. When we compare ourselves to one another, we can get nervous and doubt our own chances of success. I have done this before, but am starting to see the error of my ways.

These types of competitive

situations do not solely occur inside classrooms, but can be found in the weight room, in a drama production, or even in the Record office. I know that competition is a natural aspect of human nature, but it can be pursued in excess at Pingry. There is already a great deal of competition involved in the "rat race" of the adult world. Why do we have to be so competitive at such an early age?

As I argued in an op-ed in the February issue of the Record, if we work together we can succeed together. The Honor Code states that "A right-thinking member of the student body will want to so conduct himself as to further the best interests of the whole school, of his class, and of any team or club to which he may belong. He will act as a member of the group, working with it rather than calculating

his own advantage." As Pingry students, we should all attempt to work cooperatively for the good of the school. We should not deliberately hinder others' success, but rather help others succeed.

In my two years at Pingry, Student Government has held many social events to bring students together, but has failed to address the idea of competition and students working together. They have the power to do something and I urge them to. For example, a team-building event can be held that is modeled after the activities on the freshman retreat at Bryn Mawr.

Having read about the candidates for Student Body President in this issue and heard their speeches, I hope that regardless of who becomes our next leader, he or she will not work for individual success, but rather will work for the success of the community as a whole.

## Mixed Advisories: a Solution?

By KASIA AXTELL (V)

A few weeks before Spring Break, my advisor, Dean Ridie Markenson, approached our advisory group to get our opinion on the current advisory system and whether or not we think any adjustments should be made. She proposed, among other things, increasing or decreasing the number of years spent with the same group. Attitudes toward these suggestions varied, with both positive and negative sentiments.

When Dean Markenson presented the idea of mixed-grade advisories, however, the response was overwhelmingly negative. In fact, of the seven of us, I was the only one of Dean Markenson's advisees to support the idea. I was surprised to see the adverse reactions because in my opinion, what is there not to like about this idea?

In my advisory, we discuss current events, and as interesting as these discussions are, think about

how much more interesting they would be if they included input from Form III-Form VI Students.

The more diverse opinions and viewpoints brought to the table, the more each student gains intellectually.

Mixed grade level advisories would also give students the opportunity to meet other students they might not normally interact with. This new advisory system would help blur the clear-cut lines that divide the grades, and it would foster a more united community.

For those of you who do not like the idea of mixed advisories, there is no need to worry; the new system probably will not be implemented. That said, I still encourage each and every member of the student body to at least think about branching out and forming friendships with both younger and older students.

Student Government can certainly facilitate the process, and I can see that they have already been trying. Last year, the "SoPhresh" Dance was created exclusively for underclassmen, since they do not go to prom. It was a terrific opportunity for ninth and tenth graders to mingle but unfortunately the turnout underachieved.

It may not be in Student Government's power to change the advisory system, but it can continue to promote the integration of different grades by creating more multi-grade events and activities. In the end, though, their efforts can only go so far. It is up to the students to take advantage of our resources and unify the different age groups that comprise our student body.



# The Pingry Record

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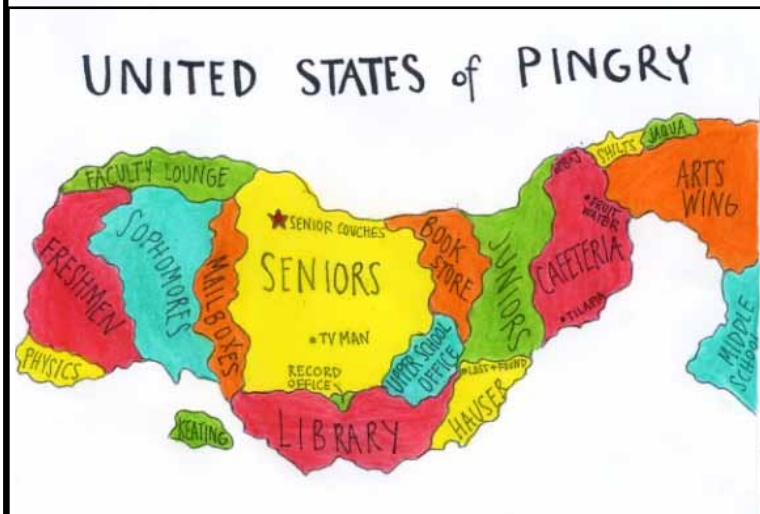
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K. Leib (VI)

## Nicole Arata

### IN HER OWN WORDS...

I came to Pingry as a freshman and have always wanted to participate in Student Government, but I always seemed to miss the sign up date. This year, however, I decided to take action to give back to the Pingry community and help lead this student body towards even greater heights because I want to make a difference in this school.

Although I may not appear to be qualified for Student Body President, I view my empty résumé as a positive. Since I have not participated in Student Government prior to this year, I have had the opportunity to formulate my own opinions of how a student government should function. I have heard students' unbiased opinions on Student Government-organized functions such as Snowball and Spring Fling, and I understand the desires of the student body. We all want to have fun whenever we can escape our schoolwork, and nobody wants time restrictions on dances or boring morning meetings.

I am running for Student Body President because I know I can handle the responsibilities of the job, and I want to prove to my peers that they deserve to be led by a responsible, active member of the community. I enjoy leading discussions and am passionate about resolving Pingry's issues, and I try to avoid nervous breakdowns since I do not want to thrust my stress on others. I tend to take a laid back approach to solving problems; I deal with conflict and find resolutions by approaching situations calmly and with a goal in mind. I am a very goal-oriented

leader, which would allow meetings to run smoothly because we could tackle one idea at a time.

Although I may go into a meeting or situation with goals already in mind, the potential for improvisational and unpredictable circumstances excites me. I love improvisation in Drama class and can use those skills to think on my feet and come up with a new compromise or solution.

If elected president, I will encourage creative initiatives to spice up the life in our "space-ship." One of my propositions is to bring a TV to the bookstore. This would allow students to watch the news and keep up with current events, especially the upcoming presidential election this fall. Also, we can subscribe to MSG Varsity to support our Big Blue teams when they are away, and special schedules, community service opportunities, and student announcements could be displayed in a central location in the school. I know the majority of you use the bookstore, whether to buy a drink or to socialize with friends, which makes it the perfect place to access information. This is just one idea, and I would love to hear my peers' feedback on it, as well as ideas of their own.

Another issue I plan to tackle is the Dress Code since I myself am 100 percent affected by the ever-changing policy—I have not worn a skirt since October, just to avoid detentions. I think the current situation completely undermines the purpose of Pingry's Honor Code because there is no trust in the students to put together a classy



outfit. Students used to be trusted to conduct themselves with honor and integrity, without being given an evil look in the hallway. The increase in detentions given is absurd, but by communicating effectively, a compromise can and must be made.

I cannot promise much, but I can guarantee that I'll always be available to listen to your ideas. My mailbox can be used as a "suggestion box," or you can pitch ideas to me in person. I will work my hardest to make sure every idea is heard and considered.

I am qualified to be Student Body President because I am respectful of everyone. I make sure to listen to every perspective on an

issue so that every voice is heard. I am not an intimidating person; I am a genuine and approachable listener. I will happily take on the task of being a liaison between the students and faculty. Since my freshman year, I have created bonds with faculty members and I truly enjoy collaborating with teachers and the administration.

It's true: if I'm elected, I could choose to break every one of these promises and assertions about myself. But I hope that those who know me or have seen me in the hallways can trust my integrity enough to give me this chance. If so, I will work my butt off to make next year fantastic. So, please—vote Nicole!

### CANDIDATE SURVEY

#### FAVORITE...

**Movie:** "The Lion King"

**Album:** "Fruit Salad" by The Wiggles

**Subject (in school):** Drama

**City:** NYC

**TV Show:** "Friends"

**Place to Shop:** Target

**Kardashian:** Khloe

**Teacher:** Dumbledore

**Word:** Porch

#### PICK ONE

**Boxers or Briefs?:** Boxers

**Coke or Pepsi?:** Coke

**Skrillex or Deadmau5?:** Deadmau5

**Stephen Colbert or Jon Stewart?:** Jon Stewart

**Draw Something or Scramble with Friends?:** I still have a Crackberry, but I like Scramble.

#### COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

**If I were an ice cream flavor, I'd be...** Chocolate Peanut Butter Cup with rainbow sprinkles.

**My most visited website is...** StumbleUpon.

**My most embarrassing moment was when...**

I threw up during my first lacrosse game as a goalie.

**My guilty pleasure is...** dark chocolate.

# Mac Hugin

## IN HIS OWN WORDS...

I have now been a Pingry student for twelve years. Yes, I know, I'm a lifer. Some people may look down upon this fact, but I believe being a lifer has some advantages. For instance, Pingry is in my blood. For twelve years now, I have spent more time at Pingry than at home. The Pingry community has become so ingrained into my life that I think of it as a second family. Even though I feel that I already know most of the students and faculty here at Pingry, I really look forward to getting to know everyone better. I have experience here, and I will be a good ambassador for the Student Body's wants and needs.

I am a very approachable person, and, let's be honest here, my 5'6" stature is not very intimidating. I am open to receiving advice and new ideas, as I feel that in order for this school to further improve, input from all students is necessary.

As Student Body President, my primary focus would be to bring the entire community closer together to improve the Pingry experience. This can be accomplished by school functions like dances, or by simply creating a better connection between the grades. I believe that school spirit is very important, and I am a huge advocate of supporting our

fellow students in artistic and sporting events. School spirit definitely facilitates unity, so I am a firm promoter of the idea.

Another idea I have is to get the bookstore to start opening at 8:00 AM again. Although breakfast is served in the cafeteria, there is a gap between the time that the breakfast station closes and the time that the bookstore opens when no food is available at all. Having the cafeteria and bookstore open at the same time in the mornings would be ideal, but at least one would suffice. Seriously, who knows when you're going to get hungry? It is truly hard to focus in class when you're starving, so having the bookstore open longer would really benefit all of us.

Some people say that I am small and cute, but don't be fooled by this; I am forceful and willing to get things done in student government (I can also be small and cute, though). I promise to take the job seriously and work my hardest to improve the Pingry community. However, as much as I want the school to run smoothly, I also want it to be as much fun as possible.

With that in mind, I think I can bring a fresh new perspective and voice to Student Government. After playing various roles on different



sports teams, I've found that my best qualities are working well with others and being a good leader. I think these traits are important for any Student Body President to have, because he or she must lead by example and serve as a bridge between the students and the administration.

I want to be Pingry's next Student Body President so that I can work to make

Pingry the great place it has the potential to be. I look forward to making Pingry a fun learning environment for all of you, and I hope to assist in furthering all of your suggestions and requests to make Pingry a better place. I'd like to thank you for giving me the opportunity and to remind you to vote for me - because once you go Mac, you never go back.

## CANDIDATE SURVEY

### FAVORITE...

**Movie:** "The Notebook"  
**Album:** "Illmatic" by Nas  
**Subject (in school):** Math  
**City:** Compton  
**TV Show:** "Pretty Little Liars"  
**Place to Shop:** Baby Gap  
**Kardashian:** Kim  
**Teacher:** Mr. Keating  
**Word:** Asbestos

### PICK ONE

**Boxers or Briefs?:** Boxers  
**Coke or Pepsi?:** Pepsi  
**Skrillex or Deadmau5?:** Skrillex  
**Stephen Colbert or Jon Stewart?:** Jon Stewart  
**Draw Something or Scramble with Friends?:** Scramble with Friends

### COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

**If I were an ice cream flavor, I'd be...** Phish Food.  
**My most visited website is...** pingry.org.  
**My most embarrassing moment was when...** I was mistaken for a middle schooler...last week.  
**My guilty pleasure is...** "The Suite Life of Zack and Cody."

# David Soled

## IN HIS OWN WORDS...

Why should I be Student Body President? Not only am I amusing, somewhat decent looking, and funny, but I have the experience needed to run a successful Student Government next year. I've been class president for the past two years, and in this role I've worked hard to provide my peers with the best student life experience possible. I have created the school's first exclusively "SoPhresh" dance, proposed couch decorations during spirit week, and voiced my opinion on awarding a prize to the winner of spirit week, among many other things.

I would love to see Student Government hold more social events throughout the year, such as a lock-in at Funplex, a hypnotist show, or a field day. I know how to dance, have fun, and party. You can be confident that if I'm in charge of organizing and planning school dances like Homecoming, Snowball, and Spring Fling, you will have the time of your life. You would not have to worry about a bad theme for Homecoming or Spring Fling, either; I will make sure everyone finds something to wear so that everyone is excited to go.

I also plan to make Monday morning announcements less like Fox News at ten and more like Saturday Night Live's Weekend Update. Monday mornings are hard enough, and sitting through monotonous student announcements makes the day even more tedious. When possible, I will attempt

to show funny YouTube videos that everyone would enjoy, as well as share stories and headlines from the weekend. I promise to bring humor to the announcements through acknowledging pop culture and political events of the weekend. I will congratulate and mention the accomplishments of our Pingry sport teams and musical performers in their weekend games and shows.

I also want us to return to the days when we were one big community. Lately, each grade rarely interacts with the others, and school spirit outside the classroom is at an all time low. As Student Body President, I will make sure that Student Government is not only a liaison for the students and the faculty, but a liaison between students, too. In hopes of bringing out more fans and audience members, Student Government would sponsor certain games, concerts, shows, and performances, as well as provide things like fan buses, pizza dinners, and tailgates to encourage Pingry students to cheer each other on. The best feeling is to have people cheering you on when playing your best and working hard.

I know it would be cool to place flat screen TVs throughout the school and provide new couches for every grade, but Student Government simply cannot afford these luxuries. I would not support a plan like that anyway, because it would not improve student lives or make anyone's time



at Pingry more enjoyable and memorable. I want to make everyone's high school experience unforgettable, and I want this school to be a place where we have more fun and are less stressed, both in and out of the classroom. For those reasons, I am promising the best dances Pingry has ever had, new Student Government sponsored events, and the rebirth of our school's sense of community and pride.

With me as your Student Body President, there will be exciting entertainment events. Every couple of months, we will have humorous and enjoy-

able Monday morning assemblies where bigger audiences will cheer you on and support you in everything you do. I am an effective leader who makes sure that events not only take place, but that they are successful. Once you are Student Body President, there is no time to learn on the job, but thanks to my prior experience, I know that I can handle the position and I am ready for the challenge.

I know that this is not a wedding, but vote me, David Soled, for Student Body President, because I am the "best man" for the job.

## CANDIDATE SURVEY

### FAVORITE...

**Movie:** "Mean Girls"  
**Album:** You can't ask a DJ that question  
**Subject (in school):** I would say Driver's Ed, but I failed my driver's test so...  
**City:** Pawnee, Indiana  
**TV Show:** "Pawn Stars"  
**Place to Shop:** PetSmart  
**Kardashian:** Khloe  
**Teacher:** My preschool teacher Mrs. Bee (Rest in Peace naptime - pun intended)  
**Word:** President ;)

### PICK ONE

**Boxers or Briefs?:** Boxers  
**Coke or Pepsi?:** Coke  
**Skrillex or Deadmau5?:** Deadmau5  
**Stephen Colbert or Jon Stewart?:** Jon Stewart  
**Draw Something or Scramble with Friends?:** Draw Something

### COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

**If I were an ice cream flavor, I'd be...** Cookie Dough with M&Ms on top.  
**My most visited website is...** I don't think you guys could print that.  
**My most embarrassing moment was when...** everyone laughed when I sang my solo in the 4th grade musical.  
**My guilty pleasure is...** singing karaoke alone in my room.

## What Did You Think of the Candidates' Speeches?



**CAILEE CASSIDY (VI)**

*"Each candidate brings something really different to the table."*



**KATE SIENKO (V) & JACK HICKEY (V)**

*"They really captivated the audience and connected with us."*



**MOLLY KANDARIAN (V)**

*"I thought David Soled's was hilarious."*



**DYLAN SUN (VI)**

*"They were entertaining and reflective of the candidates' personalities."*



**RACHEL DAVIS (IV)**

*"Each candidate had a good speech and good ideas - it will be hard to decide!"*



**HENRIK TRAPNESS (III)**

*"Mac Hugin's was my favorite - he was so funny."*

## What Do You Look For in a Student Body President?



**CLAIRE PUTMAN (III)**

*"Good listening skills."*



**MICHAEL WERNER (IV)**

*"Someone like my sister."*



**JUSTIN SULLIVAN (V)**

*"A hard-working, honest, and reliable person."*



**HAYLEY ADVOKAT (V)**

*"Approachability."*



**KC EBOH (VI)**

*"A soothing voice for morning meeting and a good wardrobe."*



**NOLAN SULLIVAN (VI)**

*"A sense of humor."*

## What Changes Do You Want to See in the School?



**THOMAS O'REILLY (VI)**

*"Air-conditioning and new couches."*



**TEMI BUTLER (V)**

*"More vegetarian options in the cafeteria."*



**LOUIE MONTEAGUDO (IV)**

*"The grades should interact more."*



**EMILY MCCORMICK (VI)**

*"More school spirit."*



**YVONNE JENG (VI)**

*"Better food at 2nd lunch."*



**ALEC FRIEDMAN (III)**

*"Being able to wear shorts earlier."*