

DECISION 2013



KYLE CASEY • AKSHAY RAO • ADEDIRE FAKOREDE

On Thursday, March 7th, the junior class selected the three candidates for Student Body President for 2013-2014. Speeches were on Monday, March 25th, and the vote will be held on Wednesday, April 3rd. Who will you choose?

Current Student Body President David Soled Reflects on his Time in Office

By DAVID SOLED (VI)

In my Convocation speech I quoted a cheesy quote from Dr. Seuss that said, "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened." As I write this article reflecting on my past year as Student Body President, however, I have mixed emotions. I feel a combination of happiness, excitement, sadness, and nostalgia.

While I get excited thinking about the big events coming up in the next couple of months like Senior Prom, Graduation, and beginning college, I also get sad thinking about all of the memories and relationships that I have made in my past four years here at Pingry and how Pingry will no longer be my second home. There is no better way to describe these feelings than as bittersweet. Consequently, I think I am allowed to both smile and cry at the same time.

I cannot believe that exactly one year ago I was running for Student Body President. Even before I set foot in Pingry, it was something that I wanted and strived to achieve as a high school student. Last year, Spring Break was less of a break and more of a creative campaigning session. I made signs that included, "Not Gas, Not Liquid, Soled" and "Voting Soled is a Solid Decision." I even ordered fortune cookies that included personalized messages to get people to vote for me. I thought I was a member of Barack Obama or Mitt Romney's campaign team and tried to think of every possible way to convince people I was the best person for the job or at least bribe people for their vote.

When the Sunday night before break was about to end and the week of campaigning was about to begin, I was very calm.



I thought that the other contenders were nowhere near as ready as I was for the upcoming week. I was sitting on the couch when my mom came in and said, "David, you still haven't

practiced your speech that you are doing in front of the school tomorrow. Can I hear it?" I could not believe I had completely forgotten the speech that was due the next day and way more important than any sign or piece of candy.

Nevertheless, I was elected as Student Body President and feel that Student Government has done a lot this year. We have put on a phenomenal Spring Fling, SO(PHresh)Dance, Homecoming, and Snowball. We have made plans for future community events like a hypnotist show and a Field Day. We have met with members of the school to discuss issues like security and stress. Most importantly, we gave our input on what we think will and will not work with the new block schedule next year.

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I would like to give a huge shout out and thank you to all the elected officials on Student Government this year. I have gotten to know every single one of them quite well, and each grade could not have chosen a more fantastic group of kids to represent them. These kids have worked very hard to lead their classes and provide them with fun activities and I am so proud of everyone. With Hurricane Sandy, a major surgery on my knee, and an incredible amount of snow days, this year has truly been insane and unpredictable. I would like to give a special shout out to all the freshman representatives who came into Student Government with fresh ideas and an eagerness to act on behalf of their peers despite a rocky beginning to the school year. I hate to be that person, but as the leader of Student Government, I can say with confidence that these kids are not only the best looking in school, but are also extremely funny, smart, and hard working.

Not only has this school year flown by quickly, but I feel like my entire high school experience is almost gone and has passed by faster than I expected. Pingry and the members of the Pingry community have both truly changed

who I am as a person and who I aspire to be in the future. Despite spending long nights on homework, stressing over the AP and SAT exams, worrying about college decisions, and dealing with the everyday drama of being a high schooler, I know every single moment was well worth it.

I have had the best four years of my life and I hope all the underclassmen appreciate every second they spend in this school. One day they will be like me—happy to have had the opportunity to come to Pingry, but deeply saddened that the experience is almost over. I take great pride in my classmates and teachers here at Pingry, who have all become my friends and role models. Pingry not only has the best and most engaging faculty, but it also has the brightest, most athletic, most musically gifted, and most diverse student body. It has been my biggest honor leading you all and I hope you all had an amazing year. I am no Harry Potter, but with all the magic that happens at Pingry, sometimes I feel like I am at Hogwarts.

Thank you for all the support this year!

With much love,

XOXOXOX

David Soled

P.S. What did the baby corn say to mom corn?

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Kyle Casey



Lower School, my favorite day of the year was Field Day.

I never felt happier to be a part of the Pingry community. There was such a sense of school spirit because it was one of the few occasions each year when both campuses got together, and it was always so much fun. We were split into three teams (red, white, and blue) and competed in some of the most random events that you could think of, but were always so excited about the friendly competition and super

fun games.

I think that bringing back that experience is something that has to be done, since school spirit is one of the main ways that we will remember our high school. What Blue Army did this year by encouraging everyone to go to athletic competitions and other school events, performances, and concerts is just what I am aiming to continue next year.

If I am elected, I will continue to build school spirit and help to ease the transition from our cur-

different projects that are happening around school.

As we all know, next year, our schedule is being changed in a huge way. We are adopting a block schedule and for many, this is daunting. I want to be there to help everyone transition and get accustomed to this new schedule, working with both the students and administration to smooth out any problems we may face. Student Government has already started working with Upper School Director Dr. Denise Brown Allen and other administrators to anticipate problems and explain what students are thinking and worrying about with the new schedule. However, we will not know exactly how everything will work out until we experience it for a few weeks next September. I think that will be a very important time for us because everything will be changing and it will be necessary for the Student Body President to help work through any problems that might come up and voice the opinions of the students. Since I am a very vocal and honest person, I believe that I will be able to help the students have their comments and questions heard by the administration.

One of my other main goals will be to accomplish something we have been working on in Student Government for the past several years. As I said before, I have been going to Pingry for twelve years and have seen changes in the school, both good and bad. When I was in the

IN HER OWN WORDS...

To be honest, running for president really scares me. Just thinking about putting myself out there in front of the entire school and running even with the possibility of failure is terrifying, but it doesn't matter. I decided to do this because I think I would be good at it. I am a lifer – I've been at Pingry for twelve years and have seen it change and evolve. Pingry is part of who I am. The majority of my life has been spent at this school and I believe that I can help it become even better if I am elected Student Body President.

I have been in Student Government for three years now, and have been fortunate enough to work closely with both Marisa Werner '12 and David Soled (VI), our two most recent student body presidents. I learned a lot from them both. Marisa was so driven to accomplish her goals for this school, and David has worked tirelessly to continue to build our sense of community. I believe these are both qualities necessary to be a good president.

I am driven and hard-working and know exactly how to get things done. I see myself as a very approachable person who anyone can come up to and share their ideas with and know that I could be a great middleman between the students and the administration. I am not afraid to share ideas and certainly not afraid to voice my opinions or help out with the

CANDIDATE SURVEY

FAVORITE...

Movie: "Miracle"

Song: "I Think I Love You" by David Cassidy or "Dare You To Move" by Switchfoot

Subject: History

City: New York

TV Show: "Psych"

Place to Shop: Madewell

Teacher: Mags (although I never had him) or Dr. Murray

Word: Aglet

PICK ONE

Gangnam Style or Harlem Shake?: Harlem Shake

Calling or Texting?: Calling

Jessica Alba or Jessica Simpson?: Alba

Red Mango or 16 Handles?: 16 Handles

Facebook or Twitter?: Facebook

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

If I could switch places with anyone for a day, I'd be... Harry Potter

My favorite app is... SnapChat

My most embarrassing moment was... when I came in dead last in a swim race... in almost every meet.

rent schedule to the new one we will have next year. These are just a few of my ideas that I believe I will be able to accomplish. I have worked hard to get to where I am in the election today, and I know

that I have what it takes to be an effective leader. I hope to get the chance to work with many of you if I am elected for Student Body President next year, so don't forget to vote for me!

Adedire Fakorede



qualities and that students will be comfortable enough to come up and talk with me in the hallway and discuss any issues they have.

As a student myself, I know it would be great to be able to provide every class with brand new luxurious couches, a couple of Segways for each grade,

and a snack bar for each class's common area. However, the school simply cannot afford that. Also, the snack bar would create a big mess and there would be Segway skid tracks all over the school.

Although I cannot ensure these luxuries, I promise to do all of the little things

CANDIDATE SURVEY

FAVORITE...

Movie: "Jack Reacher"

Song: "One Love" by Bob Marley

Subject: Biology

City: London

TV Show: "The Walking Dead"

Place to Shop: Target

Pick Up Line: "If I had a nickel for every girl as beautiful as you, I'd have five cents."

Teacher: Mrs. Barbosa, my 3rd grade math teacher

Word: Subtitle

PICK ONE

Gangnam Style or Harlem Shake?: Harlem Shake

Calling or Texting?: Texting

Jessica Alba or Jessica Simpson?: Alba

Red Mango or 16 Handles?: 16 Handles

Facebook or Twitter?: Facebook

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

If I could switch places with anyone for a day, I'd be... Jason Statham

My favorite app is... Yelp

My most embarrassing moment was... when I was mistaken for a faculty member my sophomore year.

to make the year become much more enjoyable. After all, "it's the little things

that count!" Vote Adedire Fakorede for Student Body President!

IN HIS OWN WORDS...

I joined the Pingry community as a freshman and from day one I sincerely felt at home. I was a very happy and energetic freshman who loved meeting new people in the hallways and making friends with people from other grades. Throughout my life, I have been a big friendly kid who is unafraid of walking up to anyone and introducing myself.

In the beginning of freshman year, I decided to run for class president. Unfortunately, I was not elected. When looking back at the experience, I regret letting that disappointment from the ninth grade election keep me from running for student government during my sophomore and junior years. This past summer, I remember thinking to myself about running for Student Body President and it wasn't until school began that I did some intense soul searching and asked myself why I wanted to take up this position.

So, I did some research. I first learned the responsibilities of a Student Body President. I initially believed that the role of a Student Body President

was to just speak to the entire school during morning meetings. Of course, this is not the case. I learned that as a Student Body President I would be responsible for attending monthly meetings, organizing dances, and most importantly being an advocate for the entire student body. Even though these responsibilities are not too overwhelming for me to handle, it is obvious to me that these responsibilities are not exactly "a walk in the park." While I have no experience in Student Government, I am totally aware of the responsibilities of a Student Body President. I also promise to do my absolute best to ensure that everyone will have a great time during my presidency.

So that brings up the ultimate question: "Why should you vote for me?" I am the right man for the job because I am determined, hardworking, and very approachable. These are three qualities that I think are important for a Student Body President to have. In order to be successful in this position one must be a voice for the student body and advocate for their needs. I feel that I possess these

Akshay Rao

IN HIS OWN WORDS...

My motto in life is that "If you can't remember it, it must not have been that fun." In my two and a half years at Pingry, I have made some great memories but I can't help but think that there are a lot more good memories to come. I will not rest until the memories we make next year are nothing short of spectacular. As Student Body President, I will make next year the most fun and memorable year.

I have been in Student Government for the past two years. I was the Vice President my sophomore year and am currently the junior class President. I feel that I have done a good job leading my class over the past two years and believe that this is a good indication of my ability to accurately represent the entire student body. It is important for a President to be aware of how Student Government operates and the responsibilities that come along with assuming this role. My leadership and Student Government experience enables me to understand what the job of Student Body President entails and allows me to pick up right where David Soled leaves off. The president assumes this position right from the time that the seniors leave for their ISPs and there is really no time to learn the job.

I think that the Student Body President should find a balance between improving social life at Pingry and improving the

academic life. Along with helping organize all of the dances and Student Government sponsored events and activities, I also put together finals study groups for my entire grade to utilize at the end of last year. Although there were not many people who utilized the groups, I still think that the concept is good and that the groups could really benefit everyone when we are studying for finals. With better participation these groups can help all of us work together to succeed as a community. On a less nerdy note, Student Government is currently planning a Field Day for this year. Depending on the school's schedule it may or may not happen, but it will definitely happen next year if I am elected. Field Day is a fun event that can help bring the entire student body closer together.

School spirit is extremely important for a school because it builds a stronger sense of support in the school community. With all of the things that Pingry students juggle on a daily basis, I think more school spirit can help us all feel like we have an entire school cheering us on and hoping we succeed.

The Blue Army was an awesome program that was revitalized this year. It drastically improved school spirit, and I really think Student Government should get more involved with this program next year. I know that when I am playing



sports I love seeing my friends and classmates in the stands. I would like Student Government to provide and organize more fan buses, tailgate events before games and help raise awareness of the various athletic events taking place. Having a huge fan section in blue at most sporting events would raise school spirit and boost morale.

Personally, I love to have fun and I think I can make next year

really fun for everyone in the community. I will bring a fresh, new energy to Pingry that will help the school both academically and socially. They say laughter is the best medicine and I think that I can help make the community smile and laugh a little bit more by providing an antidote to our hectic and stressful lives. If I am elected, next year will be the best school year ever. Let's make some memories. Vote for Akshay Rao!

CANDIDATE SURVEY

FAVORITE...

Movie: "Step Brothers" or "21 Jump Street"

Song: "Just a Little Bit" by 50 Cent

Subject: Every subject (I love school)

City: Martinsville, NJ

TV Show: "The Bachelor"

Place to Shop: Amazon

Pick Up Line: "How you doin'?"

Teacher: All teachers (I love teachers)

Word: Swide (swerve + roll tide = swide)

PICK ONE

Gangnam Style or Harlem Shake?: Harlem Shake

Calling or Texting?: Calling

Jessica Alba or Jessica Simpson?: Kate Upton

Red Mango or 16 Handles?: 16 Handles

Facebook or Twitter?: Facebook

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE

If I could switch places with anyone for a day, I'd be... TanTan Wang (III)

My favorite app is... Compass

My most embarrassing moment was...

I was wearing basketball pants in school without shorts underneath and my friend thought it would be funny to rip them off. I was standing in the middle of the hallway in my dinosaur boxers.

Commentary: How Student Government Can Improve Pingry

Does the Cafeteria Discriminate against Vegetarian Students?

By ABHIRAM KARUPPUR (IV)

Every day, I am forced to stand in a line when attempting to get food from the lunchroom. The line slowly shuffles forward before I step up to order my food. As usual, I ask my one, simple question, but the line grinds to a complete halt. The lunch staff looks at each other, sometimes in confusion, and then unsurely answers my question. Now, this question isn't a brainteaser or a complex math problem that would require some amount of thinking.

All I inquire about is the contents of the food that is being served. I'm a vegetarian, which means that I can't eat foods that contain meat or fish, nor can I consume gelatin or chicken stock, which actually comes as a surprise to many people. I know that in a land of hamburgers and roast beef, I am rather unique and disadvantaged. However, I believe that in a school that stresses the concept of diversity, there should be equal amounts of healthy vegetarian and non-vegetarian options.

The problem with the lunch offerings in our cafeteria is that there constantly appears to be a disproportion between the non-vegetarian and vegetarian options. This does not apply just to quantity, but to quality, too. On any given day, the lunchroom offers four main

dishes, two special dishes, pasta, a sandwich or wrap of some type, and two soups. There is also the option to make your own sandwich or salad. However, the quality of the non-vegetarian options more often than not exceeds the quality of the vegetarian options. For example, the other day, the cafeteria provided oven-roasted buttermilk chicken, but the vegetarian counterpart was steamed corn. The special offerings are almost always meat products, and the non-vegetarian soup is always more sophisticated than the vegetarian offering.

The lack of vegetarian options is not only disappointing, but is also unhealthy, as the vegetarians can only eat vegetables and starches. There is a limited amount of protein available for vegetarians, and they are unable to find foods that satisfy all of the food groups.

Another concern I have with the lunch offerings is the lack of proper signage. Some of the offerings appear vegetarian, but often contain some meat products in minute quantities. The soups are the best example, because it is not easy to discern which soup is vegetarian. On one particular day, the soups were Tortellini and Tomato. Those names alone do not signify which soup is vegetarian, and I end up having to clarify what is

what with the lunch staff. The signs provide the name of the soup, but do not indicate the ingredients. If more information were provided with the food, there would be less confusion, and vegetarians would be able to evaluate their choices more effectively.

This issue has also crept beyond the lunchroom setting; it has started to become apparent at school-hosted get-togethers. During Homecoming, the offerings available to the attendants for lunch were very limited, and there was only one type of burger, which happened to be hamburgers. The only options available to vegetarians were a pasta salad and burger buns with cheese. The school should have provided a vegetarian burger option, as well as more entrées to choose from.

This is an important issue within the community, and is something Student Government should get involved in. Student Government can promote an initiative to increase awareness of the health benefits of certain foods, and can increase the amount of information available to students. Better signs can be made, which would include nutritional information.

Student Government should also be more responsible for providing better quality options for vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike, and there

Kim Promotes Camaraderie throughout the Community

By LORI KIM (IV)

When I was applying to private schools as an eighth grader, the main thing that attracted me to Pingry was the emphasis put on community. On my visiting day, I was welcomed by incredibly friendly staff members and students, and even as a prospective student I still received smiles in the hallway.

The other day in advisory, we discussed how students should maintain close relationships with teachers and be comfortable talking to faculty members about any issues, whether they are school-related or personal. However, every advisee agreed there is not a single teacher in the school that he or she could have a brutally honest heart-to-heart with.

One student even brought up her experiences visiting other larger schools, and how the students all had very friendly relationships with their teachers. Why

should be a variety of offerings across all of the food groups. Health issues are increasing in the United States, especially obesity, which affects 35.7% of adults and 17% of children (Wikipedia). We, as a community, should promote the serving of more health-conscious foods that come from all of the food groups.

Vegetarian options should

doesn't that happen here?

If we always emphasize community and the importance of having mutual respect for one another, then why does one group of freshmen sit in the arts wing during CP, while another group of freshmen sits by the science rooms at the same time?

Such a problem is very prevalent in my grade. Back in October, the school held its annual pep rally, an event designed to increase school spirit and camaraderie within grades. While other grades stood up and encouraged their peers participating in various events, the students in my grade quietly sat on the bleachers, with just a couple of cheers every so often.

It disheartened me to see that we couldn't even show support for other students in our grade, regardless of our friend groups. What made matters worse was the lack of unity, which has

be equally as important as non-vegetarian options, and the quality of both should be the same. Everyone's dietary needs should be addressed, and no one should be at a disadvantage.

In a school that stresses acceptance and diversity, everyone's needs should be heard and everyone's needs should be satisfied.

become so routine that this lack of support didn't seem to bother a majority of my peers.

I am in no way implying that Pingry is a cold, unfriendly place—actually quite the opposite. However, we, students and faculty, lack a sense of family, even though we attend a considerably small school. Although there are just over 140 students in the sophomore class, I, along with many of my friends, do not know the names of everyone in my grade. However, in my middle school, my class size was just over 300 and I knew the names of every student in my grade.

Another more visible issue at Pingry is the strong division between grade levels. Outside of the peer leadership program, students from different grades rarely interact. A possible solution, which has been discussed in the past, could be mixed-grade advisories to promote more communication between grades.

Regardless of who wins the election, I hope Student Government addresses the lack of camaraderie in our school. Ultimately, it is up to the students and faculty as a whole to create a greater sense of community here at Pingry.

What Issue Should Stud Gov Focus on Next Year?



DILLON NOONE (III)
"School spirit."



KAMAU HOLSTEN (IV)
"Wearing shorts earlier because it gets really toasty in here!"



MATT BARICKMAN (V)
"I think students need a field day as a stress reliever."



KORYNA O'BESSO (V)
"More bonding between grades and in the community."



MICHAEL JAMES & JAZMIN PALMER (III)
"We both like the idea of bringing back Field Day."

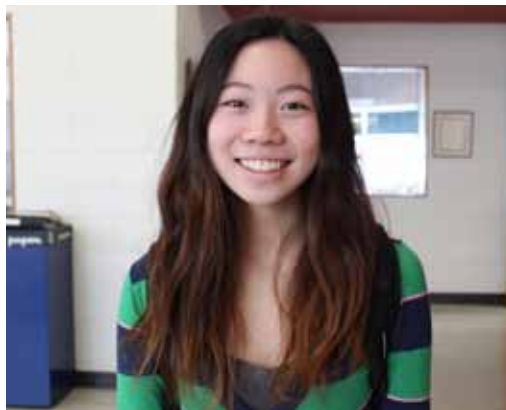


TANTAN WANG (III)
"Increasing the cafeteria food portions!"

What Did You Think about the Speeches?



BRANDON BECKFORD (III)
"Kyle addressed everything."



ALLISON YU (V)
"I liked Akshay's speech because he connected with the audience best."



LIBBY PARSONS & LIBBY LEE (III)
"We liked Adedire's because it was short and sweet!"



JONATHAN BUTLER (IV) AND LAUREN GRAVES (V)
"Akshay's speech was funny, engaging, and the perfect length."

Commentary: How Student Government Can Improve Pingry The Importance of Committing to Clubs

By CHARLOTTE ZEE (V)

The summer before my freshman year, I anticipated the start of a new school year. Most importantly, I was looking forward to forming friendships with students in all grades. I thought that joining clubs would be the perfect way to do so, and when Club Fair came around during the first trimester, I was all about it.

From the perspective of a new freshman, Club Fair was overwhelming, yet fun. I got the chance to explore each booth with my friends to find what interested me. I came across students who held all different types of interests, some of which differed from mine.

While browsing through each booth, I noticed that some of my peers signed up for clubs because of the free candy and baked goods and had no intention of actually

participating in these clubs. I tried to limit my commitment to clubs because I expected each one to be a time-consuming and legitimate obligation.

Much to my surprise - and chagrin - it took months before I finally received a few emails from club presidents, the majority of which were regarding meeting times and yearbook pictures. This lack of commitment and student involvement really disappointed me and made me question the motives of some of the club creators.

Although, at the time, I was disappointed by the lack of involvement, I now realize that there are those occasional clubs that are actually committed to meeting more than once per school year, such as the Student Diversity Leadership Club and the Speech and Debate Team. Sadly, these clubs are more

of an exception than a rule.

Some other committed clubs include the Entrepreneur Club and SMAC, both of which hold bake sales and even milkshake sales to support charities or funding to keep their clubs alive. I have noticed and applaud the few dedicated members who are responsible. I have also noticed that the few students who are actually willing to work hard to fulfill the mission of their club are, unfortunately, not commended for their efforts.

I hope Student Government can make Club Fair a more serious event to increase student involvement. Unfortunately, even I have been guilty of signing up for clubs and not being able to attend every meeting.

I have realized the error of my ways and want to make amends and try to attend at least one meet-

ing to see if I am interested. In order for clubs to effectively help the community, students need to realize that clubs take time and commitment.

I hope that Student Government addresses the lack of communication within clubs as well. If Student Government helped advertise bake sales and dress down days, or even teamed up with club presidents to make larger events available to more people, clubs would be much more fun and effective.

Clubs can significantly benefit from these small yet crucial changes, and it will be easier for the Pingry community to participate in events and meet new people. As soon as Student Government brings attention to these issues, clubs will be able to create the positive effect on the community that they were originally created to do.

Special thanks to Dr. Jones for advising Student Government!