

MSL Caucus

Official Newsletter of the Maryland Student Legislature Alumni Association



WINTER 2003

MSL Alumni Association Marches On

Directors Authorize MSLAA Bylaws Implementation

In August 2002, the Board of Directors authorized, by a 7-1 vote, the implementation of the Maryland Student Legislature Alumni Association Bylaws. The document, over 16 months in the making, outlines the basic tenets, principals, and operational functions of the Maryland Student Legislature Alumni Association (MSLAA).

The most important aspect of these bylaws is the establishment of requirements, duties, and expectations for the four officers who will join the President of the MSLAA in comprising the Alumni Committee. These four directorates, for Alumni Relations, Communications, Development and Finance, will set the course for the continued growth and evolution of the MSLAA during the coming years. The President of the MSLAA will serve as a member of the Board of Directors during his or her two year term.

The Alumni Steering Committee (ASC), made up of Brian Griffiths, Kristen Fraser-Ellis, Peter Smith and Matthew Burger, worked diligently, and debated heartily, through draft after draft of what ultimately came to the final bylaws. Upon its approval by MSL's Board of Directors, MSLAA President Brian Griffiths appointed Ken Shepard, Mr. Burger and Mr. Smith as MSLAA's interim Directors of Alumni Relations, Development and Communications, respectively. Mr. Smith is also MSLAA's Acting Vice President.

The Communications Director is tasked with the publication of the alumni newsletter (*MSL Caucus*), upkeep of the Alumni Database, publicizing MSL events and providing content to the MSL Alumni Website. The Director of Development is tasked with two major objectives: encouraging growth through continued alumni and corporate giving, and disseminating information in an effort to promote and grow the organization. The Director of Alumni Relations is responsible for coordinating with the student program to welcome new members and planning MSLAA events, including the Annual Meeting as well as any social and networking events.

Mr. Smith graduated cum laude from Salisbury State University in 1999, where he was named most outstanding senior in political science. He was a member of MSL from 1997-1999, where he served as president of Salisbury State's delegation, and later as MSL Governor. After graduating, Smith continued his service to MSL as a member of the ASC. He is currently a regulatory program analyst with the US Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, DC.

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Notes from the Chairman of the Board of Directors

During the summer of 1994, I realized the purpose of the Maryland Student Legislature, Inc.'s Board of Directors (the Board). We had recently lost two delegations and our newly elected Governor resigned. As an incoming sophomore and recently elected Lt. Governor it was my job to pick up the pieces. If not for the Board's William Troy Simmons and William C. Woodcock, the MSL may have ceased to exist that August. I applied for membership to the Board of Directors shortly after graduating from the University of Maryland, College Park because I wanted to ensure that MSL would be available for future students.

Of course the Board doesn't just step in when problems arise, the members work all year to improve the program and make it easier for students to participate and lead. The Board is always looking to expand its membership or find interested individuals to take on special projects. To find out more about us, check us out on the web at <http://msl.org/bod/>. If you remember your experiences and have ideas on how to improve the experiences of the current students we'd love to hear your ideas.

Vice Chairman Jeremiah Kelly (Western Maryland College '01) is working diligently on the organization's third Five Year Plan and facilitating the recreation of the Faculty Panel. Director Douglas Testerman (UMBC '98), is working on MSL's on-line archives and the Board and Alumni sections of MSL.org. He is also assisting the student webmaster in his duties. Secretary William Troy Simmons is putting together the written history of MSL so students no longer have to recreate the wheel. Treasurer Michael Berlin is working on investing corporate funds to provide additional income. Director Daniel Zubairi is hosting the MSL.org website and providing technical support for web functions. Brian Griffiths recently joined the Board as Alumni President and is working on implementing the newly adopted Alumni bylaws. As Chairman, I am struggling with locating additional funding sources for the organization, and certainly would appreciate your help.

Please feel free to share your ideas with us or attend our next meeting (Sunday, April 13th at 1PM at UMCP). For your convenience, this newsletter contains the names and e-mail addresses of the current Board members. You can also call the State Office at (410) 431-8888, or toll-free at (888) MSL-0717. Your participation as a student helped make the organization strong. Your participation as an Alumni or Board member can be rewarding and productive, and help make MSL even stronger.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Susan Dill-McConkey,
Director and Chairman of the Board

MSL CAUCUS

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PUBLISHED BY THE MSL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Peter J. Smith, Editor-in-Chief

MSL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ms. Susan McConkey, Chairman

Mr. Jeremiah Kelly, Vice-Chairman

Mr. William Troy Simmons, Founder of MSL, Secretary of the Board

Mr. Michael Berlin, Treasurer

Mr. Daniel Zubairi, Chief Operating Officer

Mr. Douglas Testerman, Chief Information Officer

Mr. Timothy Daly, 2002-2003 Governor of MSL

Mr. Brian C. Griffiths, 2002-2004 MSLAA President

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www.msl.org/alumni

A Message from the President of the Alumni Association

Welcome to the newly updated and redesigned version of the *MSL Caucus*. What you see before you is the beginning of a new era for the MSL Alumni Association (MSLAA). Before, we were still in our infancy, trying to organize and categorize years worth of MSL records to piece together a substantial list of alumni. We were in the process of writing and rewriting our bylaws and organizing ourselves in such a way so we can provide a productive and effective organization.

The future is here. The new *MSL Caucus* is a symbol of our determination and dedication to making sure this organization succeeds. In our third year of existence, it is time to make the jump from an amorphous confederation of alumni held together by a common bond into an organization that can serve its customers (you, the alumni) in many ways. By keeping you abreast of MSL news. By giving you an opportunity to network, socialize, and keep in touch with fellow alumni, current students, and the community.

With these exciting developments coming in the Alumni Association's future, we need your help now more than ever. The MSLAA needs you, our fellow alumni, to help contribute in any way you can. As always, financial donations are greatly appreciated. But there are so many ways that you can contribute to our cause. You can:

- Contribute materials;
- Sign up to participate in the Alumni Speakers Bureau and be a guest speaker for MSL Chapters in your areas of expertise;
- Volunteer to serve on the Alumni Committee by participating in the upcoming elections to be held at our 3rd Annual Alumni Meeting.

Everybody has the opportunity to ensure the success and prosperity of the Alumni Association and the continued existence and prosperity of MSL. If you know of a way that you can help, please contact me directly at briancgriffiths@yahoo.com and we can discuss your contribution.

Lastly, I would like to thank Pete Smith, our Acting Director of Communications, for this updated redesigned version of *MSL Caucus*. When the first edition was published oh so long ago, it was designed for only to make sure the information was presented, no more and no less. When our first editor, Kristen Fraser-Ellis, stepped down, Pete stepped up and has given us this wonderful new look that is a symbol of our dedication and growth to this organization.

Welcome to the new *MSL Caucus*. As we look forward to the celebration of MSL's 15th Anniversary in 2004, we can also look forward to the continued growth of the organization and our Alumni Association. I look forward to hearing from you soon and seeing you in April at the State House.

Sincerely,
Brian C. Griffiths, WMC '00
President, MSL Alumni Association

Alumni Profile

CHRIS WHITT (SSU '00)

What are you doing these days?

I currently live in Laurel, MD and am enrolled in the Government and Politics (Political Science) PhD program at the University of Maryland. I'll receive my MA in Government and Politics in May 2003 en route to my PhD. My fields are American Politics and Public Policy. I participate in events related to the Government and Politics Department and the Black Graduate Students Association.

What did you do in 2002?

Aside from continuing on the long road to my PhD, I consulted and worked on Verna Jones' successful campaign for Maryland State Senate in the 44th district. I was also elected to my Academic Department's Teaching Committee in May, which is in the process of choosing the next departmental teaching award recipients.

How did MSL help prepare you for life after graduation?

MSL gave me insights into the policy making process. I also gained an appreciation for the work of the legislative branch of government. Debating in the actual Senate and House Chambers in Annapolis can be a real inspiration to continue in politics.

What advice do you have for MSL's current students?

Have fun with MSL. Use it as a chance to learn about negotiating and politics in general. Try to get as many friends as possible to participate. Don't act silly at the hotel during Annual Session! Conduct yourselves as professionals; it will train you for later in life.

MSL

News Briefs

MSL'S Fall Interim Assembly Huge Success!

This Fall 2002 IA was held at Morgan State University on November 23rd and 24th. The Morgan State Delegation did a great job in organizing a wonderful event, and the Governor's Social Chair Jamie Cascio also helped bring together an MSL landmark experience.

At this event, MSL proudly boasted 101 members present for session for the first time in organization history! As a result, as per the MSL constitution, for the first time at an Interim Assembly, we were forced to move into a House and a Senate!

Also at IA, as another special experience as Governor Daly had invited a delegation of representatives from the North Carolina Student Legislature (NCSL), which is the longest running student legislature in the country. By unanimous consent of the MSL General Assembly, these guests were given honorary membership into the organization and greatly contributed to the heated debate that occurred.

At IA, the General Assembly passed five pieces of legislation, one of which was a resolution to all members of the Maryland General Assembly urging the passage of Project Exile. This resolution sparked the fiercest debate of the weekend, ultimately passing both the House and the Senate by a 55-45% margin and a 60-40% margin respectively before being signed by the Governor.

At the evening reception hosted on Saturday Evening, November 23rd, MSL members had the treat of listening to and asking questions of all sorts to recently re-elected State Senator Bob Hooper. Sen. Hooper discussed a range of issues and greatly contributed to the success of the weekend.

(Continued on next page)

BYLAWS (Cont. from p. 1)

Mr. Burger was a member of MSL from 1997-2001 and graduated with a degree in Political Science from Western Maryland College. He served as the Governor's Chief of Staff during the term of Jeremiah Kelly. He works as the Development Research Director at Mount Saint Mary's College in Emmitsburg, MD.

Mr. Shepherd served as MSL Speaker of the Assembly and Lt. Governor. He graduated cum laude from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2001 with a B.A in government and politics. He is now a news analyst with the Media Research Center, a conservative media watchdog group. He has served on the Prince George's County Republican Central Committee for College Park and volunteered for both the 2002 Ehrlich for Governor and Audrey Scott for County Executive campaigns. He was also the press secretary for the Henry Nichols for County Council campaign during a special election in the Council's Eighth District.

The appointments of Burger, Shepard and Smith will expire when new Directors are elected. MSLAA elections are expected to be held at our annual Alumni meeting at the State House in Annapolis, MD, held in conjunction with the MSL Annual Session. We are excited about its implementation and look forward to seeing the organization grow with help from you, our constituency. ✧

MSL NEWS BRIEFS (cont. from p. 4)**Update Contact Info Online!**

The MSL Alumni Association is currently trying to update its records. There are several alumni that we have lost track of over the years. You can help us keep our records current by updating your contact information online at www.msl.org/alumni.

Call for Candidates

The MSLAA needs a few good alumni!

We need dedicated alumni who can donate their time and their resources to benefit the MSL Alumni Association. At our third annual general meeting, to be held in conjunction with the 14th annual Maryland Student Legislature Annual Session at the State House in Annapolis, we will be holding our first elections for officers under the newly implemented bylaws. We will be holding elections for the following officers.

- Director of Alumni Relations
- Director of Communications
- Director of Development
- Director of Finance

Each officer will serve two-year terms expiring in April 2005. For more details concerning the responsibilities of the officers, please refer to the bylaws online at www.msl.org/alumni

For questions or to express interest in standing as a candidate, please contact MSLAA President Brian Griffiths at briancgriffiths@yahoo.com. The deadline for submitting your candidacy is Monday March 31st.

MSLAA Speakers Bureau

We are pleased to invite all MSL alumni to become a part of the Speaker's Bureau. As a part of the Speaker's Bureau, you may be invited to discuss various topics of interest before the young men and women of MSL. Opportunities may include leading seminars at the student program's Leadership Training Institutes, advising students on how to utilize their MSL background in making the leap from college to professional life, offering keynote addresses at MSL functions, and more! This is a wonderful and unique opportunity to give something back to the organization - your wisdom and expertise. To sign up or to request more information, contact Director of Development Matt Burger at churchill01@hotmail.com. ✧

The Five-Year Plan, Part I: A Blurred Vision

By Jeremiah Kelly,
Western Maryland College, Class of 2001

A little over twelve years ago, Troy Simmons and a few of his colleagues founded the Maryland Student Legislature. Thankfully, the organization has withstood the test of time, but the question is, "how well?" MSL has had its ups and downs, has enjoyed great triumphs and endured significant setbacks. How might would one rate the success of MSL over the past twelve years? In my mind, MSL earns average marks, rating somewhere around a "C" or a "C+".

Why such mediocre marks, you ask? Perhaps you think that I am just a pessimist or am disgruntled. The organization looks much the same to me as it did 12 years ago; it has not enjoyed significant progress and stability. As one who has had major roles in the organization, both as Governor and now as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors, I can see where the culpability for MSL's lack of progress lies: on the Board of Directors, both past and present.

Many, including myself, would argue the Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that the MSL product is consistent, gains recognition, and continues to grow. MSL alumni understand this point. Students come and go, and some are more effective than others. Some students manage to bring about tremendous successes with few resources; other students reacted poorly to less than ideal circumstances and consequently steered the program down the wrong course. The Board is a stabilized body that experiences far less turnover than the students. It can, and should, do more.

The Board has always held the key to unlock the door leading greater and more consistent organizational success. It has stood at the brink of that greater success, but has too often not been able to cross the threshold. Why? Two reasons.

The first reason is very simple. The Board lacks a clear and common vision of the future of MSL. Some Board members think we have arrived, that we must simply improve our operations and things will take off. Others think we are missing vital pieces to the organizational puzzle, and seek to establish those. Others could care less. The reason why the Board has not been able to cross over the threshold is because there is a clear lack of consensus on organizational direction. There is no common vision.

The second is also easy enough to explain. The Board encounters a problem that many volunteer-operated, non-profit organizations face. The Board is simply all too human. All of its members over the years really do care a great deal about MSL. They have loved it since their college years. Unfortunately, Life seems to intervene and create hurdles that prevent our volunteer Board from crossing that threshold into the land of total organizational success. Board members have careers, families, and interests outside of MSL. MSL is almost never the first priority in their lives, and it tends not to be the first in mine. The Board is eager to cheer on an outstanding Governor willing to shoulder the burden of the organization for a year, and reluctant to pick up the slack when other Governors struggle.

This year, our new Chairman has asked that I begin to draft a Five-Year Plan for MSL. When I first sat down and got to work, I realized that I didn't know how or where to begin. Sure, I had my own goals and vision for MSL. But without agreement among the various Board members, how far would I get? Would my efforts be in vain? The answers are nowhere and yes!

I explained my predicament to the Board in August. The ensuing discussion took off like a whirlwind! I could see the different visions thrown together, it couldn't help but cloud the vision of everyone in the room..

I am happy to report that the Board of Directors was able to meet to hash out these different images for the future of MSL. I think we have reached a level of consensus that will allow

the officers of this organization of walk a common path. The question, however, remains: can enough members of the Board place MSL high enough on their list of priorities in order to make (*and work to implement!*) the decisions necessary to cross that threshold? If we have now agreed upon a common path, do we possess the fortitude to start walking?

I encourage all of you in the Alumni ranks to stay tuned to see how this baby develops, because it's either going to be really exciting, or more of the same. If I have anything to do with it, I can promise to deliver something that will make you all very proud. If all of the pieces continue to fall in place, we can get there. I urge all of you, please try to get involved in some part of MSL, help us get to that next level.

When it comes to the Five-Year Plan, the Board must have a common vision, and lead us down that common path and across the threshold to great successes. Get involved, help us get there! Stay tuned, I will share my progress and insights on the Five-Year Plan in subsequent installments. ✧

Editor's note: The author serves as Vice-Chairman of MSL's corporate Board of Directors.

The Five-Year Plan, Part II: Identifying the Roadblocks

By Jeremiah Kelly,
Western Maryland College, Class of 2001

The Maryland Student Legislature is in need of a long-term plan to guide its evolution and progress. In my previous installment, I discussed MSL's endurance of nearly fourteen years of ebb-and-flows, highs and lows, incredible peaks and gaping valleys. MSL has yet to address certain roadblocks, which are preventing the organization from traveling down the road of success paved by other groups, such as YMCA Youth and Government and the National Model United Nations.

The Board of Directors has initiated the writing of a Five Year Plan in the Fall of 2002 and are planning to meet on Sunday, March 2, 2003, during the Leadership Training Institute to clarify its vision for the next five years. *This meeting will need to focus on two perennial problems that have plagued MSL in the past: operational funding, and academic credibility and consistency.*

Funding

The Maryland Student Legislature, Inc., does not have the financial resources it needs to take the organization to the next level. Current funding comes from several sources: student user fees to participate; delegation membership dues of \$50 a year; infrequent Alumni donations; and all too frequently, contributions from existing Board of Directors members. While MSL is not responsible for many bills, those bills that we do have, such as maintenance of the MSL Mailbox, "800" number, and calling cards, are paid directly from the pockets of Board members. Board member funding of these expenses is neither ideal nor is it sustainable. The cost of these expenses should be covered in other ways.

Additionally, the costs of improving the organization itself have yet to find a revenue source to satisfy the needs. The list of MSL needs is long. For example, MSL has sent membership packages to potential schools and members with great success. Unfortunately, the cost of these mass-mailings are expensive (close to \$300 when you include materials and postage). While they have had success, the financial burden is again placed on members of the Board of Directors.

Another example, the Alumni Association's newsletter, *MSL Caucus*, requires significant funds for publication and distribution. Again, the money needed must come from sources other than the wallets of MSL's Board of Directors. There are many student, Alumni and Board needs that will not be addressed if other funding is not found. How can MSL reach the organizational level attained by National Model United Nations and YMCA Youth and Government? By finding the revenue to put on a total program that leaves the participant and alumni with the impression that the organization has paid attention to details, built up strong membership, and is well functioning. Unfortunately, the intentions are present, but the funds are not.

There are a number of ways to solve the funding problems, but not all are feasible. Increasing student dues for participation is a possibility, however, increasing the cost for participants is no way to increase membership, particularly from a constituency with scant financial resources. We have also discussed the idea of imposing required dues payments upon the Board of Directors. While some Board members are willing, I find it rude to ask those who contribute the most to MSL to give more, especially when most of the funding comes from their pockets already.

Areas that seem to show promise are: alumni giving campaigns, grant applications, and State Funding. One of MSLAA's objectives is to engage in Alumni giving campaigns. Their objective is possibly the most promising way to meet our needs. Much like a college Alumni

Association, the MSLAA would be very helpful in the funding venture if it were to solicit MSL alumni and ask that they contribute to the organization from which they benefitted. While the revenue is uncertain, there is certainly the potential.

I am happy to report that the Board of Directors has been working on many grant applications. With the Board paying for its members to take grant-writing classes, the grant-writing process itself is time intensive and efforts thus far have proven fruitless. The main obstacle here is time and technical skill, for which at some point an investment into a hired fundraiser may be necessary. While many are quick to point out the potential of this source, few are willing to dedicate the time or possess the skills to be successful in this endeavor.

The National Model United Nations and YMCA Youth and Government are very successful in funding their program due to the financial commitments of the member institutions, not through student government allocations, but through academic programs. Outreach to political science programs and related fields may offer a more structured and solid institutional involvement.

Finally, the long-shot answer to MSL's financial problems could lie with the Maryland General Assembly. If MSL was able to find a champion in Annapolis, particularly in the Governor's office, MSL could get state funding as did the North Carolina State Legislature during the 1990s. Unfortunately, Maryland is suffering large budget shortages and the prospects for this are bleak. The solutions are few, but increased alumni donations, academic department funding, and successful grant applications seem to be sensible solutions to MSL funding issues.

Academic Credibility and Consistency

Funding MSL through academic departments at member institutions will never occur without increased academic credibility. While we who participate(d) in MSL see the organization as an

educational opportunity, many academic institutions and faculty see MSL as another student group with limited academic benefit. This is evident by the fact that there exist few academic programs at member institutions to get students involved.

The immediate threat of this non-academic reality is that students have no incentive to come to MSL prepared as they would come to class. This lack of preparation and parliamentary skill results in weak debate based on emotional preferences instead of factual evidence. Also, the disparity in parliamentary skill creates a wide gap from those few who are knowledgeable and those who aren't. This lack of skill continues the corrosive cycle of the MSL experience, which should be intellectually stimulating and challenging, instead of free-flowing and quite pointedly, non-substantive.

There are solutions we can find in a few MSL delegations, and from examples based on YMCA Youth and Government the National Model United Nations. First, department curriculum for schools such as McDaniel College offer 2-3 credits for participation in the MSL program. For this credit, the student must research, write, and defend a bill or resolution and participate in the full weekend of MSL, reporting in 10 pages their experience afterwards. Many opponents of this argue that this creates an insincere interest in MSL, and when those participants are left without an advisor, they will flee from their responsibility.

I argue that a credit-based program, if set up properly, could create a solid delegation of students who are prepared and held accountable for their participation. For example, the National Model United Nations program only allows around 10-15 students from each school. This makes the participation competitive and relies on the faculty to have an investment in training and preparing the students. YMCA Youth and Government has a curriculum that students must participate in before they participate, ensuring that their students are ready to compete in their program. Credit-based programs could improve the academic nature of debate, bring in more

students, and possibly bring in a higher caliber of students.

On top of this, we now have an institutional investment into the program, one that will sustain MSL's life on campuses beyond the lives of current students in the program. MSL suffers from the inconsistency in its program that is vacant from other program such as UN and YMCA. Because we have no academic relationship, the quality of the MSL program depends on the quality of elected students and the spread-thin Board of Directors. When students depart from MSL, there is no guarantee that there will be MSL delegations at certain schools, that the Governor's administration will actively recruit, or that the program rehearsed and presented in a professional manner. Having the academic credibility will create a steady flow of competent leaders, consistent contact with delegations, and a higher caliber student.

The Board of Directors has re-initiated the Faculty Panel, a group of MSL advisors who will work with the Board of Directors to increase the academic credibility of the organization. Other important ideas that the Faculty Panel could take hold of would be the credit programs, recruitment, and teaching Leadership Training Institute courses. Having the institutions and faculty on board with MSL could create a snowball of support for MSL, a more intellectually stimulating and challenging program, and a high level of respectability among its peers. The first Faculty Panel meeting is scheduled for Annual Session weekend.

Conclusion

As MSL looks into the next five years, it is apparent that the organization must progress in certain ways. To meet its list of needs, funding sources must be explored and pursued. The academic credibility of the organization must be established if MSL ever plans to gain the respect afforded to other organizations, sustain its membership, and improve the program. When the Board of Directors meets to discuss the Five Year Plan, funding and academic credibility should

become the dominant topics of discussion and eventually the cornerstone of our Plan. Without addressing these roadblocks, we can assume that MSL will fail to travel the road of success as other organizations. Only with funding and academic credibility and consistency can MSL turn ebbs” and “flows” into “highs” and “highers.”✧

Take the Floor

Write, call, or e-mail us with your news, views and opinions. Tell us what you think!

We welcome your feedback on the newsletter design and format, and your views and opinions on the articles featured in this issue.

We'd also love to hear from you! Tell us what's happening in your life, both personally and professionally, and we'll share the news with your fellow MSL alumni in a future issue of *MSL*

CONTACT MSL!

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* *Founder of MSL*

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Opinion and Commentary

By Ken Shepherd

University of Maryland, College Park, Class of 2001

By the time you're reading this, the General Assembly session for 2003 should be wrapping up or already finished. I'm not sure how a lot of things will ultimately play out, though I suspect the Governor's slot machine legislation will have passed in some form, that virtually all tax increase proposals were scuttled before reaching the Governor's desk, and that the Governor will earn the grudging respect of his Democratic colleagues in the General Assembly. This will have happened despite, and perhaps because of the quick recovery from, blunders in judgment in his freshman year.

At press time, slot machine legislation remains unresolved and under intense partisan fire from Democrats. Gov. Ehrlich, as much as I hate to say it, is largely to blame for political blundering here. By submitting, withdrawing, and then resubmitting his proposal, by missing legislative committee deadlines for numbers, and by failing to garner widespread support in closed door meetings with political movers and shakers in key constituencies, the Ehrlich team created a reasonable opening for legislators to hit the Administration not just on the policy but on the competence of the freshman Administration.

Plagued by fierce opposition on slots in the House by Speaker Michael Busch, Gov. Ehrlich has had an easier go of things in the Senate, where longtime Senate President and slot machine proponent Mike Miller has presided over the successful confirmation of Governor Ehrlich's Cabinet, except for Lynn Buhl. Ms. Buhl's opposition by environmentalists provoked an altogether hasty and snippy threat of retaliation by the Governor to the environmental lobby, perhaps further antagonizing most Democratic senators and dooming her confirmation after Ehrlich refused to withdraw her nomination. This can't help the Senate's view of Ehrlich's vulnerability, but the fact that his nominee for deputy secretary will strongly advocate Ehrlich's environmental views will reinforce the Governor's resolve to bring more balance to environmental debate in Annapolis.

Of course, the Governor has done his share of things right. Ehrlich's strong stand against tax hikes is virtually certain to guarantee passage of slot machine legislation in some form or another since the budget must be balanced. Ehrlich's hands on, no nonsense performance during the President's Day weekend snowstorm and his lobbying of the President at Camp David have been key in securing federal funding for snowstorm cleanup and in expediting study of the Inter-County Connector in Prince George's and Montgomery County respectively. Finally, the Governor has transitioned his campaign chumminess with Lt. Governor Michael Steele into a strong partnership used to maximum benefit for the Administration. Steele is generally better in rhetorically selling points of the Governor's policies and as a liaison to the legislature, especially African-American Democrats, he can only help the legislative and political fortunes of the Ehrlich/Steele team and the Republican Party.

Boiling it down to a few letter grades, I give the Governor an A-minus for policy, and a B-minus for tactics for the freshman year. Room for improvement, but not bad for the first go-around. Considering the Governor's political prowess thus far, it's quite likely he could pull to the head of the class if he does his homework after the Assembly session.

Mark Your Calendars!

MSL Legislative Reception
March 11, 2003 at 6:00pm
Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD

Next meeting of MSL Board of Directors
April 13, 2003 at 1:00pm
University of Maryland, College Park
College Park, MD

MSL's 14th Annual Session*
April 25 - 27, 2003
State House
Annapolis, MD

MSLAA Annual Meeting and Officer Elections*
April 26, 2003 at 1:00pm
State House (Calvert Room)
Annapolis, MD

* Venue and/or dates are subject to change based on State House security directives

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is published quarterly by the Maryland Student Legislature Alumni Association under the auspices of the MSL Board of Directors. We welcome letters to the Editor and article submissions from our readers. Newsletter contributions may be edited for length or clarity. Submissions may be sent to the following address: Maryland Student Legislature, Attn: Alumni Association, 222 Main Street, Suite 140 Annapolis, MD 21401-2005. Please include your name, address, telephone number, and remember to identify your MSL delegation and year of graduation.



MSL Caucus
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Alumni & Parents

If your son or daughter no longer lives at this address, please forward his or her current address and phone number to us at (410) 431-8888 or (888) MSL-0717 or e-mail briancgriffiths@yahoo.com.