

MSL Caucus

Official Newsletter of the Maryland Student Legislature Alumni Association



SUMMER 2003

Duces Crastini Hodie (Tomorrow's Leaders Today)

Fifteen Years of Molding "Tomorrow's Leaders Today"

By Matt Burger
Western Maryland College, Class of 2001

For almost fifteen years the Maryland Student Legislature has been providing college students with an opportunity to participate in the political process, a forum for their voices to be heard, and a sense of their civic responsibilities. From a fledgling organization, founded by **William "Troy" Simmons** in 1989 as a graduate student at the University of Maryland, the MSL has blossomed into an organization that includes delegations from fourteen of Maryland's top colleges and universities. In the Spring of 2003, in Annapolis, the MSL's 14th student Governor, **Katie Nash** (Hood College) took the oath of office vowing to continue to foster the organization's bold mission.

Is MSL still relevant after 15 years? MSL has left a legacy of leadership in all those who have participated in the program. Many of the organization's alumni will testify to just how significantly MSL impacted on their development professionally, intellectually, and civically during their college years. "The Maryland Student Legislature not only developed my leadership and professionalism, but also showed me the importance of civic activity in my community," said **Susan Dill-McConkey**, MSL Governor from 1994 to 1996.

From the beginning, MSL has encouraged students to "step up to the plate" and take an active leadership role. The organization is

striving to foster civic responsibility and involvement among the state's young people, and more practically connect to our democratic institutions. In MSL, students do not merely enact a legislative simulation, they are advocates for legislation they have thoroughly researched, hoping that it will gain approval from the body and be sent to relevant political officials so that their voice may be heard.

The *Tomorrow's Leaders Today* campaign is the highlight of MSL's 15th anniversary. For much of its history, "Tomorrow's Leader's Today," was the popular motto of the organization. In 2002, the Board of Directors approved a change to the Great Seal of the Maryland Student Legislature and a Latin motto, "*Duces Crastini Hodie*," (Tomorrow's Leader's Today) was added. It is only fitting that this motto be the theme for the fundraising campaign and 15th anniversary celebrations.

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Notes from the Chairman of the Board of Directors

Help Us Find Our Missing Friends!

I would like to join in welcoming the 2003 graduating class to the Maryland Student Legislature Alumni Association. To our new alumni, I say thank you! Thank you for your commitment, your long hours of dedicated service, your financial support, and most of all, your *passion*.

The last day of Annual Session brings a bittersweet mix of tears and laughter, and this year was no different. For many of us, we were truly saying good-bye to the many friends we had made over our college careers.

With **Brian Griffiths'** efforts over the last 3 years and the efforts of those alumni that gave of their time on the Steering Committee, we hope that the Senior Farewells will no longer mean "so long." Unfortunately, our Alumni Website has not become as popular as classmates.com, so we need your help in locating your fellow alumni. If you are still in contact with any MSL alums, please make sure that they are receiving their copy of *MSL Caucus*.

In future editions of *MSL Caucus*, we hope to list the names of members with their school and graduation year and request your help in filling in our database. If you have any news you would like to share with us, please contact us at 1-888-MSL-0717 or e-mail Brian, the Alumni Association President at briancgriffiths@yahoo.com.

Everyone that participates in MSL leaves his or her mark on the program. It would mean a great deal to many of us on the Board, and to MSL's current students, to be able to gather all the alumni possible to celebrate MSL's 15th Anniversary at the Annual Session at the State House in April 2004.

When Troy started MSL, many thought he was doomed to fail. MSLAA proves that not only was he able to create a model student legislature, but create a viable organization which, with the help of ever expanding ranks of alumni, can make a tremendous impact on the face and voice of Maryland public policy.

Please help us contact long-lost alumni. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Susan Dill-McConkey,
Chairman

MSL CAUCUS

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Peter J. Smith, Managing Editor

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Maryland Student Legislature, Inc.

222 Main Street, Suite 140
Annapolis, MD 21401-2005
www.msl.org/alumni

A Message from the President of the Alumni Association

After our most successful post-Annual Session gathering to date, the MSL Alumni Association (MSLAA) is poised for big things. Importantly, MSLAA is fully implementing our Bylaws a full six months ahead of schedule. We have a full compliment of officers committed to working for MSL and working for you.

MSL's class of 2003 is fired up about working in the Alumni Association to help MSL grow. Many of them have pledged to donate \$20.03 a year for the next five years as a way of giving back to the program. I join them in challenging you to pledge - at a minimum - the amount in dollars that corresponds to the year of your graduating class.

Matt Burger, Alumni Director of Development, is spearheading an ambitious development plan that aims to raise \$15,000 for the Maryland Student Legislature before the end of April 2004. His plan will allow MSL to continue to raise its profile in the community and provide the financial sustainability that our organization needs to thrive (see article, page 1).

For nearly the past 15 years, MSL has provided college students with a forum that allows them to research, write about, and debate issues of local, state, and national importance. MSL has allowed students to become comfortable with important life skills such as debating, public speaking, negotiating, compromise, and leadership. MSL truly provides a place for young men and women to learn and to practice today the skills they need to be the leaders of tomorrow. The results? MSL alumni have made inroads in many fields in many parts of the country. Our alumni spread as far north as Boston, as far south as Miami, and as far west as Los Angeles. Many alumni are involved in the political process, some even having run for public office.

There are great things in sight for MSL and the MSLAA. The Students, the Alumni Association, and the Board of Directors are all working hard to take this organization to unprecedented heights. We cannot do it, however, without the help of you, the alumni. I challenge you to give back to the Maryland Student Legislature, and there are dozens of ways that you can do so. You can work with Mr. Burger on the 15th Anniversary Campaign, serve as a mentor to a local delegation, and/or participate in the Alumni Speakers Bureau. You can even make a 5-year pledge to make an annual contribution to MSL in the amount of the year that you graduated, just as the members of the Class of 2003 have done.

The MSL experience holds great meaning for many of our Alumni. Whenever I've had the opportunity to talk to my fellow alumni about MSL, to a one, they've all mentioned how much they enjoyed the experience, and that they wouldn't be where they are today without it. I ask that you reflect upon your experiences in college, in MSL, in life after you graduated, and consider the ways, both the subtle and the obvious, how the MSL has influenced your life. Think about how you might re-invest in MSL the skills and traits your developed and refined as a student. If you can help, make contact with us! MSL and the MSL Alumni Association do have big things in sight. But we need your help to make them happen.

Yours,

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

Message from Katie Nash, the Governor of MSL

Greetings from the 2003-2004 Governor of the Maryland Student Legislature (MSL)! It is my honor to serve you, the alumni, and the current student-members of MSL. One of the most amazing aspects of MSL, is the way that it evolves every year and somehow remains the same respected organization we all love and support. With each graduating class and incoming freshmen members, the organization changes bit by bit and yet its core values and principles remain the same.

This year will be challenging and exciting for the Maryland Student Legislature. Our recent graduates, left us with difficult shoes to fill, yet provided us with a strong foundation to build upon. The entire Council of State is new and we have a lot to learn and hammer out this summer. We are however, seasoned members of the organization, passionate about MSL and all that it stands for, and in close contact with our predecessors. The 2003-2004 Council of State possesses great innovation, enthusiasm, and respect for tradition. I have complete confidence that this group of extremely talented and committed individuals will serve you all as well as you have served us.

The Council of State and I have been working hard this summer to ensure that the upcoming academic year is one of MSL's best yet. In early May, the 2002-2003 Council of State and **Governor Tim Daly** (the immediate past Governor of MSL) met with the incoming officers and myself. This meeting assured a smooth transition from the past administration to the current. We discussed the goals we have met and those we will meet this approaching year, in addition to the ways we might make the transition smoother. Specifically, Governor Daly and I have been in constant contact regarding the changeover and will continue to do so over the summer and into the academic year. I'm certain that given our communication and mutual love for MSL, the transition will continue to proceed with ease.

In celebration of our 15th anniversary, the 2003-2004 year will be a period of advancement for the Maryland Student Legislature. We're going to look hard at our strategy and, thinking in terms of ten years and beyond, examine how MSL will be affected in the long term, and plan accordingly. Although you as alumni are former members of MSL, you should consider yourselves, similar to our freshmen members in that you are very much an important part of the future of this organization. I can say with the utmost conviction that the alumni are the present and future of MSL, as we continue to depend on your support and guidance, now more than ever.

The future of MSL is bright and we are grateful for the encouragement you have given us thus far. I implore you, especially the recent additions to the incredible list of supportive alumni, to continue your involvement with this exciting organization. If you have not been involved as an alumnus/alumna of MSL, get involved! We are eager for your assistance and look forward to working with you! If there is one thing I've learned about MSL, it is that for every ounce of effort you exert, dollar you contribute, and hour you bestow, your donation is returned ten-fold. On behalf of the current members of the Maryland Student Legislature, thank you for your continued commitment.

Respectfully Yours,

Katie Nash
2003-2004 Governor of the Maryland Student Legislature

Alumni Profile

SAMANTHA BARNHART (CND '00)

What are you doing these days?

Currently I live in Harrisburg, PA with my 2 cats. I work for Dauphin County Human Services, where I find new programs and funding for mental health/mental retardation, children and youth, drugs and alcohol, and aging services. I also monitor programs and liaise with the PA Department of Public Welfare. I participate in the Lions Club, and I am a consultant to Londonderry Township Parks and Recreation (I'm helping them build a bike trail). I volunteer with the YMCA Youth and Government Program. The YMCA program is very similar to MSL, but is for high school students. I have a delegation of 28 kids and I am teaching them about bill writing, parliamentary procedure and debate.

What did you do in 2002?

I ran against an incumbent for the office of Township Supervisor in Londonderry Township, a small rural area near Hershey, PA with a population of about 5,000 people. We had a turnout of about 1,200 people out of 3,000 registered voters on election day (I think I visited about 900 voters going door to door!) I ended up losing by only 21 votes. In all, it was frustrating experience and I put a lot of all the time and effort into the election, but in the end I came to realize that local politicians have the most thankless jobs in the world, and I am glad that I did not get elected.

How did MSL help prepare you for life after graduation?

The main life lesson I took from MSL was that there are as many different opinions as there are people. Even though we were all in college and the same age, our life experiences and methods of rational thinking make us all unique. I also learned from my experience as Governor that diplomacy is vital to getting work done in a large group and that it can help minimize opposition. Most importantly, MSL allowed me to share a great experience with many of my classmates at Notre Dame. It was fulfilling to see them enjoy the program and take away great memories from the experience. To this day, many alum of Notre Dame still talk about MSL.

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

As you go through the program, just remember you only get out of MSL what you put into it. Work hard to write great legislation, research more than you should and study "parley pro." This is also true as you go through life. When it comes to politics, my advice is as follows. Shake a lot of hands, but do not try to be everyone's friend. Some friends are not worth having when you are trying to succeed in politics. Remember to always watch out for yourself, keep your mouth closed and your ears open. The last cliché I will regale you with is that politics is a filthy, dirty profession, but if it makes your heart race and your blood boil, it will become a part of you and it will never be boring.

Editor's Note: Samantha Barnhart was MSL Governor for the 1999-2000 program year.

The logo consists of a yellow rectangular box at the top with the letters "MSL" in bold red font. Below this is a black rectangular box with the words "News Briefs" in bold white font.**MSL's 14th Legislative Year a Major Success**

We congratulate the students of MSL on completing on the program's most successful years! During the 2002-2003 legislative year, the students enjoyed a bicameral Fall Interim Assembly, submitted nearly 80 pieces of legislation and just more than 25 percent of the pieces were approved by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Daly. All student-authored legislation considered during MSL's 14th legislative year can be accessed online at www.msl.org/legislation/index.html. Additionally, Council of State elections for the 2003-2004 legislative year were highly competitive. Our congratulations and best wishes go out to MSL's newest leaders:

Governor: Katie Nash (Hood College)

Lt. Governor: Patrick Abbondandolo (UMBC)

Attorney General: Dan Holler (Washington College)

Secretary of State: Titus Hamlett (UMCP)

Speaker of the Assembly: Byron Macfarlane (UMCP)

MSLAA Annual Meeting

The MSL Alumni Association's 3rd Annual Meeting took place on April 26th at the State House in Annapolis. The Calvert Room played host to our meeting and to the first series of Officer Elections. Several graduating seniors from the Class of 2003 joined us at the meeting so that we could greet our newest members of the Alumni Association. MSLAA President Brian Griffiths, Board of Directors Chairman Susan McConkey and MSL Founder Troy Simmons briefly addressed the gathered Alumni. **Lt. Governor-Elect Patrick Abbondandolo** also joined us to urge alumni to help mentor existing delegations.

We are excited to announce that the following alumni were elected unanimously to serve on the MSLAA Alumni Committee:

Director of Communications: Ken Shepherd (UMCP, 2001)

Director of Finance: 1st Lieutenant Marilisse Gonzalez, USA (CND, 2000)

Director of Alumni Relations: Elisabeth Nelson (Frostburg, 2001)

Director of Development: Matt Burger (WMC, 2001)

Mr. Burger was subsequently elected Vice-President of MSLAA by the Alumni Committee on June 10, 2003. Lt. Gonzalez, currently on active duty, resigned as Finance Director effective June 9, 2003. While we're disappointed that Lt. Gonzalez needed to resign, we are extraordinarily proud of her and her service to our country. We're eager to welcome her back to the MSLAA upon her return stateside.

Tomorrow's Leaders Today (from p. 1)

The Maryland Student Legislature has incredible potential and value to the young people of Maryland. To mark our 15th anniversary, MSL is undertaking a capital campaign. The *Tomorrow's Leaders Today* campaign marks our first major outreach to alumni and the greater Maryland community. The goals of our campaign are to:

- 1) increase awareness of the organization with alumni, the public and business community;
- 2) encourage support from alumni, the public, and business community to begin an endowment fund and support the general needs of the student program; and,
- 3) to commemorate 15 years of outstanding achievement as an educational organization.

As the 15th Annual Session in Annapolis approaches in April 2004, we hope that MSL alumni will return to see how the organization has continued to mold student leaders. MSLAA is also encouraging alumni, corporations, and foundations to make a financial contribution to the Maryland Student Legislature both as an investment in the civic education of tomorrow's leaders and as a show of commitment to the young people who will shape the future of our great Republic.

If you'd like to contribute to our capital campaign, look for the mail-in form on page 11 of this newsletter and send it to MSL with your enclosed check. Alternatively, you can log on to our website at www.msl.org and click on the *Just Give* link to make a contribution electronically. As always, your contribution is tax deductible. We hope that you will show your continued support for MSL as we celebrate our 15 year of continued commitment to student excellence. ✧

MSL News Briefs (from p. 6)**MSLAA Announces New Annual Giving Coordinator**

We're proud to welcome **Gina Eosco** on board as MSLAA's new Coordinator of Annual Giving. Gina will be responsible for building and maintaining relationships with our Alumni through the fundraising efforts of the Alumni Development Office. Gina will also be working with seniors in the Student Program to create a culture of philanthropy which is essential the future of the Maryland Student Legislature.

An MSL alumna, Gina is a 2003 graduate of the University of Maryland at College Park and holds a degree in Environmental Science and Policy with a concentration in Politics and Policy. While involved in MSL, Gina served as the Governor's State Political Liaison in the 2000-2001 year, and was elected Governor in April 2001. After completing her term as Governor, she served as Chief of Staff to the Governor in 2002.

Gina is currently employed by the American Meteorological Society, and works in their Atmospheric Policy Program. Her previous experience in government and policy includes internships with Taxpayers for Commonsense and the Office of Congressman Stephen F. Lynch (D-MA). We are honored to have her with us!

MSL 15th Anniversary Campaign Update

The *Tomorrow's Leaders Today* Campaign to mark MSL's 15th anniversary is now well underway. The campaign already has generated an impressive response from alumni members who are interested in supporting the future strength and growth of the MSL program. Through the *TLT* campaign, MSL has also begun to build relationships with the Maryland business and higher education communities. On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Alumni Association, and the student program, we would like to express our gratitude to all those who have made a contribution to the campaign. Thank you!!

*MSL News Briefs (from p. 7)***Congratulations 2003 Graduates!**

We extend our heartiest congratulations to the class of 2003. We're thrilled to welcome you into the fold as MSL alumni, and hope that you'll remain active in MSL through the Alumni Association!

The Class of 2003 (Senior Pledgemaker)*

Seth Kleiner *	William Pinkine *
Ryan Eakin	Jamie Casio *
Holly Harrington	Merry Beth McKee *
Rebecca Appel	Sherri Garlitz
Tiffany Taylor	Alexander Lendrim
Erin Frankenberry *	Andrew White
Brian Smith	Deirdre Parker
Gina Eosco *	Seth Schraier *
Hilary Jackler	Katie Mucklow
Natoya Mitchell	Dawayne Lee
Candace Cook	Gregory Lederer
Crystal Towns	Mehri Shadman

Class of 2003 Senior Pledges

As part of an effort by the Alumni Association and the Board of Directors to increase awareness of ways students can support and stay involved with the Maryland Student Legislature after graduation, MSLAA announced a Senior Pledge program at the 2003 Annual Session. This program allowed graduating seniors to pledge \$20.03 to support the organization. We are pleased with the response we received from dedicated MSL seniors and hope to continue and expand the program in 2004. It's not too late to make your 2003 Senior Pledge! If interested, contact Gina Eosco at gmeosco@yahoo.com.

MSLAA Seeks Corporate Development Coordinator

The Alumni Association is looking for an individual in the Maryland area interested in serving as the Coordinator of Corporate Development. This is a volunteer (i.e., unpaid) position. The incumbent will be responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships with local corporations and conducting corporate fundraising.

The Coordinator of Corporate Development's primary duties are to contact, educate, and solicit Maryland's corporate leaders regarding the Maryland Student Legislature. The Coordinator will be expected to attend the periodic meetings of the Alumni Committee to provide a report on his/her activities and to answer questions. This is an excellent opportunity to develop professional, leadership, and fundraising skills. Interested candidates should contact Matt Burger, Director of Development by email at churchill01@hotmail.com.

Update Your 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.

MSLAA Speakers Bureau

We are pleased to invite you to join the MSLAA Speakers 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 include leading seminars at MSL Leadership Training Institutes, helping students use their MSL background when transitioning from college to professional life, 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 Matt Burger at churchill01@hotmail.com. ✧

The Five-Year Plan, Part III: Clearing the Hurdles

By Jeremiah Kelly,
Vice Chairman, MSL Board of Directors

The Maryland Student Legislature is close to drafting its first Five Year Plan in almost a decade, choosing to put to paper strategic vision for growth and development. The Board of Directors has committed themselves to a path that, if agreed to and followed, will lead MSL to the growth and success it deserves. In doing so, the Board has had to reconcile conflicting visions for the future of MSL. Many of the recent components that have been added to the organization, such as the Alumni Association and State Faculty Panel, are evidence that there is an organizational vision being defined even before it is laid out in black and white.

Much like a sprinter accepting the rigors of hurdles in track and field, the Five Year Plan is a voluntary commitment to a more challenging course. MSL has begun to clarify its vision for the future through adding organizational components that will contribute to its success – we will call this “lacing up their shoes.” It has clearly marked the roadblocks that the Board anticipates will hinder our progression, such as funding and academic credibility – we will call these the hurdles. Now that MSL is equipped to run, it is now time to talk strategy. There should be three parts to MSL’s strategy to run the Five Year Plan course: breathe correctly, adjust the attitude, and use momentum.

Breathing correctly for MSL, like running athletically, is all about knowing *when* to take its breaths. So much attention is given to the operation of the MSL program that, often, attention to the organization as a whole suffers. I would argue that at certain times during the year, it is vital for MSL to take a few breaths to reinvigorate its run. I offer two major events that could provide the breath of fresh air MSL needs

to fill its lungs: a Summer Leadership Retreat and the Succession Meeting.

The Summer Leadership Retreat is designed to gather the many organizational components of the organization (the Board of Directors, State Government, Alumni Association, and eventually the State Faculty Panel) to meet over the summer to set their goals for the year to come. Ideally, this event should take place in a retreat location and follow a three-part agenda.

Part 1 would consist of individual meetings for the leadership of each organizational entity to set goals, strategies, and tactics.

Part 2 would be the unification of those goals into a single, coordinated vision for the MSL Legislative Year. This unification would require the leadership of each entity to meet together and determine how each can support the goals of the other in specific terms (who, what, when, and where).

Part 3 would include a presentation of this year-long plan in order to gain the investment of the membership of the participating groups.

The Summer Leadership Retreat is the perfect remedy for the lack of coordination and communication between MSL’s different functioning bodies. Sponsored by the Board of Directors, the first Summer Leadership Retreat has been tentatively scheduled for August 2004 and will help to ensure that the MSL Legislative year won’t be plagued by preventable “hurdles.”

“... the Five Year Plan is a voluntary commitment to a more challenging course. MSL has begun to clarify its vision for the future through adding organizational components that will contribute to its success”

The Succession Meeting, as described in the Protocols and Procedures, is a time to turnover the reigns of the State Government. This event, usually held a few weeks after the Annual Session, is sponsored and supervised by the Board of Directors to ensure that all materials are transferred from one administration to the next. More importantly, it should be a time for the Board of Directors to 1) communicate its expectations of student leadership, 2) introduce the Board, Alumni Association, and Faculty Panel and their respective functions to the incoming state government, 3) establish the mentoring relationship between the Board and Council of State.

Often times, the Board does not clearly define its expectations of student leaders which results in inconsistent and inefficient programs and coordination. For new student leadership interested in making their mark on MSL, it is essential for them to know the roles and responsibilities of the different organizational entities as to limit the duplication of efforts and the reinventing of the wheel. Most importantly, MSL is an educational organization which relies on the growth of student leaders to grow and develop the organization.

The Board of Director's has initiated its mentor program to aid the Council of State in their growth as leaders and also to reach their potential in their service to MSL. Building strong mentoring relationships between the Board and Council of State can ensure that MSL will flourish as the students grow into their roles within the Council of State – the Board can help with the details so the student will be able to make the biggest impression on MSL possible. All in all, the Succession Meeting should be instituted and held in high regard as it offers the breath required to run an effective race.

An athlete's attitude can win or lose a race. If you enter the competition without taking the race seriously, you will most certainly lose. If you enter the competition knowing that only your

best effort will suffice, demand that level of performance of yourself, and push yourself to improve constantly, you will likely be on the winner's stand. MSL must continue to develop a "corporate" attitude.

Like most corporations, MSL has bylaws, a mission, and functioning entities to support it. What MSL could use in larger doses is a "corporate" mentality which drives MSL, Incorporated, to perform the duties of a corporation. It is important to further elaborate on what I mean by "corporate" mentality (not cut throat capitalism or shrewd business practice), but let me first describe the current attitude, a real blessing in my mind.

MSL is not a corporation with paid employees, but rather one with a very small number of committed volunteers who have invested their heart, soul, time, and money into building the MSL that we appreciate today. To be honest, you couldn't buy the commitment I see from those involved with MSL. My argument is not to abandon the very vehicle that has gotten MSL to this point, but rather a simple calibration in attitude could help the corporation run like one.

MSL must develop a "corporate" mentality in terms of recordkeeping, accountability with assignments and deadlines, fundraising, and growth. All too often, MSL functions sub-efficiently in these areas which hinders donor confidence, prevents successful grant proposals, breeds the fall-through in duty, falls short of earning potential, and limits growth. Those of us only familiar with MSL in terms of operating and supporting the student program know MSL as that alone – the educational student program.

Some of us still view MSL as a club we joined during college, not a corporation with a mission and corporate responsibilities. I argue that there is, and must continue to be, much more behind the scenes efforts for the educational program to function to its potential. The

membership of the Board, Alumni Association, and Student Program must demand that MSL operate with a corporate attitude – the continual development of this attitude across the board will inspire giving to MSL, knowing their tax receipt is soon to follow. This attitude can reshape the organization into a goal-oriented machine, functioning with many parts, designed to achieve our goals. This attitude can transcend all levels of MSL, Inc. and make growth and progress contagious. Remember, MSL can win this race with a corporate attitude.

Momentum, when used properly, can propel a runner over the hurdles, whereas momentum not utilized leads to deceleration and increased exertion to clear those same hurdles. In my view, the Maryland Student Legislature is riding a wave of momentum and excitement never before seen. With the creation of a living, breathing Alumni Association, MSL has begun to reconnect to those individuals who have benefitted so much from our mission.

MSLAA recently held their first election of officers and is currently running at full capacity, ready to begin work on Alumni outreach, fundraising, and program support. This Annual Session saw the Inaugural Meeting of the State Faculty Panel, an advisory body of MSL faculty advisors who will be working with the Board of Directors to build strong delegation, facilitate recruitment efforts, establish MSL-for-credit programs, and help student leadership grow at their respective institutions. MSL has also initiated the first capital campaign in its history, the 15th Anniversary *Tommorrow's Leaders Today* Campaign, in which MSL aims to raise \$15,000 to be distributed to the Student Program, the endowment, and the Alumni Association.

To make a long story short, it is an exciting time to be involved with MSL. The success of the Five Year Plan that we are developing will depend on harnessing and focusing the momentum the organization is witnessing. MSL

must use this momentum to propel us over the hurdles and past the finish line.

MSL is ready for its first Five Year Plan in a decade. The vision is secure, the roadblocks identified, and the strategy clear. If MSL is successful in running the Five Year Plan course, it must breathe correctly, adjust the attitude, and use its momentum. There is no question that the Succession Meeting and Summer Leadership Retreat are vital to MSL's future success.

MSL must reflect upon and evaluate its program and processes, establish goals for the year, and get its entities on the same page. MSL must continue to develop a "corporate" attitude that demands a certain level of performance in carrying out the duties of a corporation, which include record keeping, fundraising, accountability to deadlines, and growth.

This is arguably the most exciting period of growth MSL has ever seen, the momentum of which can be used to propel us into a successful Five Year Plan. The Board of Directors is likely to begin work on the plan this summer with approval expected during the summer for fall meeting. It is time to put the ideas to paper; time to put the vision into a plan. The time is now, either we define it, or it defines us. We are ready to run this race. ✧

"The membership of the Board, Alumni Association, and Student Program must demand that MSL operate with a corporate attitude – the continual development of this attitude across the board will inspire giving to MSL, knowing their tax receipt is soon to follow. This attitude can reshape the organization into a goal-oriented machine, functioning with many parts, designed to achieve our goals."

Opinion and Commentary

By Gina Eosco

University of Maryland, College Park, Class of 2003

Got Power? On August 14, 2003, someone pulled the plug on over 50 million Americans resulting in economic losses exceeding \$1 billion. Is it time to rethink U.S. energy policy?

The Blackout of 2003 is yet another example of how the U.S. is far too dependent on “traditional” energy forms. The United States has repeatedly shown that they do not believe in the precautionary principal when it comes to energy policy. It takes a huge blackout and over \$1 billion in economic losses to finally show the U.S. government our vulnerability. The sad part is that this incident could have been prevented.

Both current U.S. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham and his Clinton-era predecessor, current New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, agree that the current electric grid is old – very old. In both the Clinton administration and the current Bush administration, the consensus is change the existing policy. For a decade now, the U.S. government has been forewarned about possible limitations of the current system, and yet, nothing has been done to prevent an incident like the Blackout of 2003.

With a growing population, a growing need for electricity, and a growing dependence on fossil fuels, it is time to rethink U.S. energy policy. It is time to ask Congress, “Got Power?”

It is an interesting question to ask, Got Power. How many members of Congress had power on August 14th? How many members of Congress have power today and will continue to have power until their terms are up for reelection? Do you see any states taking any precautions in our struggle for power?

You will be happy to know that the state of Maryland is considered a leader in the DC metro area for renewable energy forms. The *Washington Post* reported on August 12th that 5 percent of the energy consumed in Montgomery County will now come from renewable energy sources, mostly wind energy generation sites. Increasing renewable forms of energy will better our economy by preventing power outages like the Blackout of 2003. In addition, increasing our usage of renewable energies will subsequently decrease our dependency on fossil fuels. This, in turn, will enhance our national security, as we will not have to depend on foreign sources of fossil fuels.

The state of Maryland should be applauded for its energy policies. However, the state of Maryland cannot sustain the energy needs for the entire U.S. Congress must implement a stronger energy policy that integrates renewable energies into our current system. Just like the U.S. cannot continue to use the same old grid for electric power, the U.S. cannot continue to use the same energy policies they have used in the past. The U.S. needs an upgrade.

Congress, can you do it? Got Power?

Editor’s Note: The views expressed on this page are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the MSL Alumni Association or its officers, or the members of the Board of Directors of MSL, Inc.

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MSL Alumni Association Leadership

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MSL Caucus
 Maryland Student Legislature, Inc.
 222 Main Street, Suite 140
 Annapolis, MD 21401-2005

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Mark Your Calendars!

MSLAA 1st Annual Orioles Game Day
 September 7, 2003 at 1:35pm
 Orioles Park at Camden Yards
 Baltimore, MD

MSL State Government Meeting
 September 7, 2003
 University of Maryland, Baltimore County
 Catonsville, MD

MSL's Leadership Training Institute
 October 4, 2003
 University of Maryland, Baltimore County
 Catonsville, MD

MSL Board of Directors Fall Meeting
 October 19, 2003 at 1:00pm
 University of Maryland, College Park
 College Park, MD

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.