

State of the College Address

Good evening. Thank you for all coming out tonight. I know that there's a lot of other stuff that you could be doing right now as we all start getting into our first real assignments of the year. The fact that you chose to be here tonight shows that you are genuinely interested in the direction that Colby is headed- not just this year, but in the foreseeable future. Forums like this are the most direct avenue of communication, and tonight is a great chance for us all to get on the same page as we start the year together.

Improving communication is one of Jake and my two main objectives for the year as the SGA President and Vice President. This applies on a number of different levels: It's communication from top to bottom, bottom to top, and side to side. It means that in our capacity as the official liaison between the student body and the administration we'll be relaying information that we learn from the governing bodies of the school to you; both indirectly through your dorm presidents as well as direct communication in the form of official announcements.

The reverse is also true. In addition to our usual means of gathering information through dorm presidents, SGA will be doing a number of online surveys to get as much hard data as possible from the student body to better inform our actions and better represent you. Each of us on the SGA exec board will have office hours twice a week and will be doing a fair amount of tabling in both Pulver and the street. Basically, we want to gather as much information as possible so that Jake and I can realistically say that we speak for 'the student body.'

Additionally, we will be facilitating communication between students, and particularly between the leaders of student groups in a few different ways. As Jake already mentioned, we will be having weekly meetings with the President

of SPB and the chair of PCB to touch base and collaborate on event planning. I will also be leading a larger and more diverse group of leaders in a group called SLCC: Student Leadership Collaborative Committee. This committee will be comprised not only of the leaders of SPB and PCB, but also sports captains, COOT leaders, hall staff, Goldfarb chairs and CCOR facilitators. The goal of this committee is really to focus on setting the tone for the student body, and what we can do in our various capacities as student leaders to create positive change on campus. Additionally, when the student body is abuzz with a controversial issue that arises, this will be the perfect place for student leaders to discuss the situation, get on the same page, and formulate a plan of action together.

If nothing else, over the past couple of years we have learned what happens when lines of communication break down, and we're going to avoid that as much as possible this year.

Another, more grassroots, location for these same types of discussions are within our residence hall communities, and one place to have them is through RHAs. For those of you who don't know, Residence Hall Associations, or RHAs, are groups within every dorm comprised of the Dorm President, the CAs of that dorm, the dorm Eco-rep, and a few other residents who are appointed by the Dorm President. In my own experience, I've found that RHAs are an incredibly useful way for Dorm Presidents and CAs to gather information FROM and relay information TO their dorm. They are also a fantastic way to get to know the people you live with, deal with any issues of dorm damage, and plan events to strengthen dorm unity and sense of community.

This brings me to our other main objective for the year- promoting a strong sense of student responsibility on campus. This includes each student's responsibility for his or her work in the classroom, accomplishments and initiatives as part of a student club or organization, and actions in our daily

lives outside of the formal institutions of Colby.

It also goes further than this. It is Jake and my intention to help to create an atmosphere on campus this year that encourages students to take personal ownership of our school. The more we, as individuals within this community, think of Colby in this way, the closer we will become, the more relaxed our community will be, and the more we will enjoy and benefit from our years here together.

So those are our general objectives for the year: strengthening communication and promoting student responsibility and personal ownership of our school.

I'll end my bit with a request for each of you as you start planning for what you want to accomplish this year and for the rest of your Colby Career.

I'm asking you to get involved. This doesn't necessarily mean that you have to join every club on campus. In fact, don't. Pick one or two things that you really care about and pursue them. Being an involved member of the Colby community can mean anything from reading the civil discourse to being on the board of the Goldfarb Center. We only have four years here, and any senior will tell you how quickly those years go by.

Now, I couldn't get up here and talk about getting involved without shamelessly plugging the two organizations that I'm most involved in: SGA and the COOT program.

If you are interested in being on SGA, I would urge you to go to our website and explore running for one of the positions available this fall. We're having a meeting tomorrow night in Miller 14 at 8pm for anyone interested in running, and I hope to see many of you there. We are also still accepting applications for All-College committees until tomorrow, and you can find out more about

that on our website.

Also, just because classes have begun, does not mean that COOT is over. If you are seriously interested in changing the tone of student life on campus, one of the best ways to do it is to become a peer mentor through leading COOT or Iced COOT. This year we're expanding the feb-frosh orientation program and finally giving it as much attention as Fall orientation gets every year. Iced COOT is going to be bigger and better than ever and will be open to ALL members of the class of 2013, so that the students that have been in Salamanca and Dijon for the fall semester will get to know their classmates who spent first semester on Mayflower Hill.

I'm really excited about this program and I can't wait to get started planning it with our new Director of Outdoor Education, Nicole Caruso, who starts work tomorrow. There'll be lots of advertising when we begin the application process for leaders and 2013 participants, so look out for that in the weeks to come.

Alright, enough plugging. As you just saw at the Campus Life Expo, SGA and COOT are just two of many organizations on campus, and I'm that each of you can find at least one to get involved with that is right for you.

There are a lot of really exciting and new things going on on-campus this year, and it's a great time to be a Colby and a perfect time to get involved. The climate on campus is constantly changing, and it is up to each of us to take ownership of this school, and help to point it in a direction that we can collectively support and be proud of.