



FROM THE POLITY A Blooming Garden of Johnnie-Flowers

Ah yes, mid-February. That liminal state between Valentine's Day and spring break, where red heart stickers decorating shirts and hats alike are blown away by ferocious winds sweeping in from College Creek. Boreas, who spread a crisp white blanket of snow one last time over red bricks and faded green fields, now reluctantly makes way for tender Zephyrus. With keen eyes, you may spot his first darling snowdrops lifting their delicate petals above ground. Birdsong, too, will soon return along with warm spring sunbeams breaking triumphantly through the clouds above. Spring whispers the promise of rebirth, rejuvenation, and new possibilities formerly hidden under cover of frost. So, too, do the seniors look toward the promise of the future as they one by one, eyes sparkling with excitement and trepidation, enter the King William Room for their oral examinations. After four short years and an hour-long conversation, they each emerge from the cave into the light of new understanding. Each Johnnie contains great potential within them, their own unique flower seed to be nurtured while both on and off campus. Just like the snowdrops blooming in the harshest snows, the difficulty of the Program makes the beautiful bloom of the Johnnie-flower that much more splendid.

Underclassmen, heed my words. Do allow yourself to be-at-work-staying-yourself through your wonderful potential for being. You have inquisitive minds aplenty; wonder, explore, laugh, cry, read, sing, love, live! To my beloved seniors: Let us guide the underclassmen with open arms and wisdom as we approach our final few months in this remarkable place. Let us instill curiosity about the magic and mystery of SJC in the years below us. They are our legacy, the ones gracefully stepping into the leadership roles we now hold, the ones to whom we can pass down our secrets. The Underquad, the burnt popcorn of Humphreys, the Paca tub room – these are our true legends to be kept alive by the next generation. Let us spring forward into this new season together, seniors and underclassmen alike, and cultivate even more beautifully unique Johnnie-flowers as we all bask in the glorious sunshine of knowledge.

Herschel Reuben

FEDERAL, STATE POLICY THREATENS COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY & FINANCIAL STABILITY

The College often sees itself as insulated from national political circumstances. A more thoughtful tone of political discourse and an absence of student protest culture can lead to a sense that political conversation at the college remains within a sort of bubble, detached from any obligation towards action in local or national politics. However, with the current dismantling of many key federal services and the state budgetary crisis, this much wider political world may very soon have dramatic effects on our College, and the lives of all students who attend it. This article will feature information about federal policy impacts for the College, while next week an article will examine the impacts of state legislation.

On a federal level, the Annapolis campus does not directly receive grants from the federal government for programming, and thus has not been affected by the Trump administration's attempts to freeze federal grants. However, students are direct beneficiaries of numerous federal programs, and the upcoming congressional budget may dramatically increase the cost of attendance at the College, and bar communities who currently form important parts of the College from attending.

"When I think of federal money, I actually think first of federal money that supports students directly," explained Nora Demleitner, Annapolis president. "Loan programs, work studies, the supplemental opportunity fund, that we're getting from the Department of Education." As of the 2021-22 academic year, the most recent year that statistics were available from, this federal department, which Donald Trump has proposed to eliminate, provided loans to 46% percent of Johnnies, as well as Pell Grants for 19% of the student body. While the recent, now rescinded, grant freezes were eventually clarified to not include work-study and Pell Grants, and the current nominee for Secretary of Education, WWE executive and failed political candidate Linda McMahon, has clarified Pell Grants are not at risk, the futures of loans and loan forgiveness programs are much less clear.

Additionally, the federal government has direct power over immigration, meaning that it may become much harder for students to get visas to study at St. John's. Our college, which derives great benefit from a wide variety of international experiences, and receives a good deal of funding from Davis Scholars, as well as other international students, stands to lose both a part of its vibrant intellectual community and financial

security if the number of international students is severely curtailed. Demleitner said that there are already reports "of more rejections for people from certain countries," indicating that future classes may be more restricted in countries of origin.

Most challenges to these programs come not from the executive branch, from which most changes to spending would be unconstitutional, and thus challenged in the courts, but instead from Congress. The Budget Reconciliation process has just begun, and a wide variety of proposals are currently on the table to be included. In the FY2025 House Budget Resolution submitted by House Republicans, \$880 billion are to be cut from areas under the responsibility of the House Committee on Education and Workforce, some of which will likely impact higher education. "There's a whole host of proposals," explained Demleitner, "and they range from cutting Pell Grants to expanding programs, not in terms of the dollar amount going up per student, but in the types of programs that could benefit... more workforce programs, short term certificate-type programs that are not currently funded by Pell Grants."

Further injury to students may come from proposals to tax all scholarships, ending public loan forgiveness, which many Johnnies pursuing careers in education or public service benefit from, and, critically for a college with such a large international population, an end to F-1 visas for non-STEM majors. Demleitner said that these changes may have long term impacts on college attendance in general, driving people away from liberal arts programs such as St. John's, where cost is high relative to salary after College, and for the future careers, discouraging necessary professions like teaching or the job of public defenders, which have a high cost of education for low pay. "If any of these proposals were to be implemented, then obviously, there will be long term ramifications about who even wants to go to college, and what type of college."

So called "culture war" issues may have little direct impact on the College, but increased scrutiny from the federal government against any program that they label "DEI" may nationally dampen dialogue, and bring a culture of government repression of academic speech which may, through the students who come to the College, affect the tenor of conversation on campus. In general, the chaos created by the federal government in dismantling many of the systems that support higher

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This Week in Seminar

Freshman:

- Thursday, February 20th: Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*; Books VI, VII
- Monday, February 24th: Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*; Books VIII, IX

Sophomores:

- Thursday, February 20th: Shakespeare: *As You Like It*
- Monday, February 24th: Montaigne: *Essays* (selections)

Juniors:

- Thursday, February 20th: Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*; (selections)
- Monday, February 24th: Locke: *Second Treatise of Government*; Chapters I–IX

Seniors:

- Thursday, February 20th: Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*
- Monday, February 24th: Freud: "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through", "Mourning and Melancholia"

Friday Night Lecture:

Cancelled :(

Upcoming Events:

Friday, February 21

- Book signing: Joshua Rogers reads from *Psychedelic Psalms*, Edensword Bookstore, 5pm

Wednesday, February 26

- Seminar Discussion on Smithson Essay, "Sedimentation of the Mind", Conversation Room, 5:30pm

OPEN LETTER TO THE BOARD

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board,

This weekend, you will vote on a proposed revision of the Polity. Such an integral document, instituted by our founders Stringfellow Barr and Scott Buchanan, bears much consideration. I write this letter to make one single request: please, allow students to see these amendments. I have been told that my College is amending its Constitution, and St. John’s has taught me that good citizens inform themselves on public matters such as this. I have dutifully attempted to see these changes; but to my surprise, we students have been forbidden to see what is happening. I hope the Board will understand that this blindness, and on such an important subject, has left me both concerned and confused. How are we to be good citizens of our Johnnie “polity” if we are blinded to such an important facet of its governance? I make this request not for my own personal access, but so that the broader student polity may see these amendments in full.

The most likely reason that I can think of to not release these amendments to the student body may be quoted directly from Aristotle. His Nicomachean Ethics tells us that “of the political art, a young person is not an appropriate student, for he is inexperienced in the actions pertaining to life, and the arguments are based on these actions and concern them.” However, this is also a college that immediately follows Aristotle’s Ethics on the freshman reading list with his Politics. St John’s faith in the young political student is implicit in our very list of readings. If the student body cannot think critically and rationally, if we are not capable of approaching a text with intelligence - if my mind is not free - then I do not know what we do here. St. John’s, above all other institutions, believes in intelligent and rational discourse among its students. Such has been repeatedly emphasized by official speeches and letters to the student body, which have praised students’ dedication to this value.

I added my name to the College register at Convocation because I believe that it has found success in that endeavor, and I know that you have joined the Board because you wish to uphold that success. Yet despite being praised as students who engage in intelligent discourse, we have been barred from it regarding this vote. If we share this value between us, I humbly ask that we share in our efforts to uphold it.

A POEM

Sometimes

A little bag of oranges
A little plate of limes
A little conversation
A little wasted time
Salad with tomatoes
Vinegar and salt
Sometimes things are lonely
Sometimes not at all.

Helen Wagner

My thoughts on this are also strongly informed by my own work. Next semester the student Delegate Council will hold its regular constitutional review, in which our own Review Committee will write and propose amendments to the entire polity for a vote. The student body has designed a constitution that not only allows but *requires* those under it to see what is happening, because the Program has taught us that we must become good citizens of our polity. I do not advocate for students to have a significant vote in your review process, for reasons amply provided by Aristotle. I believe at least one correspondent of mine has thought that I am demanding a formal student committee to provide feedback to the Board, like the Faculty has. In reality, my request is far more simple. If our College’s motto is true - if these books and this balance are engaged in making me a free adult - then I wish the Board to trust the freedom they wish me to learn and allow me to see that which is set to govern my education. All I ask is to not be blind.

I hope this letter is received well. I truly mean it with the utmost respect; I value what you do, and it is your efforts that make it possible for my College to exist. I confess that it frightens me when we are forbidden to see these changes. It is too late now to have any effect on the current process, but I request that for future Polity reviews the details may be publicized before the vote is held. If our College is to produce free minds, it must set them free in practice as well as in principle. Trust the education that you impart to me, and I promise that you will find it to be a valuable education indeed.

Reagan Bottomley

Aphorism of the Week

ὁ τι βούλομαι ἐνθάδε ἂν γάρφωμι, τῶν δὲ πολλῶν ἂν λάθοι, καὶ ἀμαρτήματά περ εἰ ποιοῦμι.

Tarik Mahmud

A PLEA

And the Lord God shall be to thee as thou art to thy janitors.
(One of the gospels, probably)

With that verse in mind, here are some virtues that I’d like to add to the whole faith, hope, and love business:

- 1. If your paper towel misses the trash can, pick it up and try again. Take as much time as you need.
- 2. Clean up your table and put your chairs back once you’re done eating at the dining hall.
- 3. Bus your dishes like you’re the one who’s going to have to wash them. Think Tetris.

If you aren’t a direct cause of any of these problems, congrats! But don’t celebrate for too long--maybe it’s time to step up your game and clean up for others.

These things matter. How you do anything is how you do everything.

Anonymous

Rumor has it that Mr. Freeman will be personally renovating the BBC this summer. Further details are unknown. – A different Anonymous

Federal, State Policy...
(continued)

education leads to fears that the greatest damage to the College may come in a still unexpected way. Demleitner recounted a meeting with Maryland’s Congressional delegation’s staff, in which a Republican’s staffer, “literally said to us... if you hear something [about action against colleges and universities], call me.” Demleitner said that this, “was, to me, the single scariest comment... You’re in the building; why would I hear about this long before you?”

St. John’s receives far more funding from the State of Maryland, which is also at risk due to a state budgetary crisis. In the next issue, I will provide coverage of the impact state legislation will have on the College.

El’ad Nichols Kaufman

LIZA LOVE’S
BEAT OF THE WEEK:
Sandy Toes - Linda Perhacs

If the weather be a sign, Ms. Nature is feeling those February blues. It’s a time for introspection and creature comforts, but we won’t let that get us down. Linda Perhacs’ “Sandy Toes” from her 1970 album *Parallelograms* is a warm beam of sunshine through stratus and pine. A sweet psychedelic-folk track to carry you to the weekend’s approaching shoreline. Ride the wave, dear friends.

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ABOUT THE
ST. JOHN’S
COLLEGIAN

The St. John’s Collegian is the weekly newspaper of St. John’s College Annapolis. We work to bring quick and timely coverage of important events going on, to help develop a more informed student body. If you’re searching for more in-depth investigations and reporting, as well as essays, art and culture, check out the Gadfly, our affiliated publication, which is published once every three weeks.

Want to submit an article? We always need more writers, whether for opinion or reporting! Submissions for news articles should be between 400-600 words, while opinion should be kept short at 350 words. Just email sjca.collegian@gmail.com with your article, and we will work to get it in print! Longer form articles and more in-depth exploration of ideas should go to the Gadfly, which accepts submissions at eanicholskaufman@sjc.edu.

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