



FROM THE POLITY

Attention:

Mathematical Discovery

Dear Math Community,

Ms. Benson's senior math tutorial (MCD 34, T,R,F 9-10:20 a.m.) has discovered a new mathematical point! On our quest to construct a pair of Lobachevskian parallel lines, we found ourselves spending some time in Appendix II (manual pg. 86). Well on our way to complete this construction, we stumbled upon an ultra-parallel line springing forth from our illustrious point Q, perpendicular to our representative line VW, the patriarch of our family of ultra-parallels.

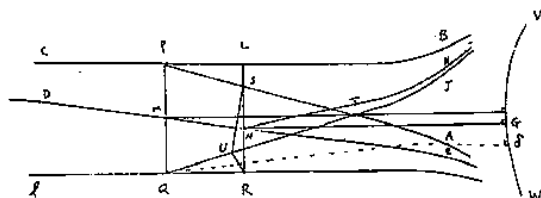
We were astonished to find that such a foundational line concluded in an unnamed, and presumably unnoticed, point. We realized in this moment that our discovery came with a responsibility: we had to name this point.

Here's how it happened: one of your very own peers, Ms. Gennadiou, braved the board. All watching with amazement, she boldly declared, "I will name this point S". To which, Ms. Benson suggested that we use a Greek letter. Everyone agreed, it was a fantastic idea, the Greek-ness of our point would surely make it stand out from the rest. Ms. Gennadiou quickly adjusted: "I will name this point δ because it kind of looks like an s." There were no objections. Our class is like a math machine.

I am sharing this news with a dual purpose. Firstly, if somebody could alert whoever is in currently in charge of math in this country, we could coordinate a time to receive our award. Secondly, we have reason to believe that there may be another unnamed point lurking somewhere in this diagram. Fear not— we are working diligently to find it— but if your class happens to beat us to it, please, again, alert whoever is in charge of math in this country. Really, it's your civic duty.

Adieu,

M(athematician). Chloe Niedzielski



CURATING THE SJC IMAGE

Enrollment Committee Strategizes Against Dropping Application Rates

Institutes of higher education throughout America are being challenged to prove their value to upcoming generations, and St. John's is no different. Over the next few years, the country is facing a demographic cliff; the number of students graduating high school who are applying to college is significantly lower than in the past. More critically, the attitude of American young adults towards higher education is undergoing a distinctly negative shift. Students no longer recognize the cost and commitment of a college degree as worthwhile for their career and development, and those who do see value in a college degree gravitate towards large state schools and STEM programs. As a result of this, small liberal arts colleges, and humanities programs in general, are struggling. And for a school as uniquely dedicated to the liberal arts as St. John's this issue is becoming ever more pertinent.

As one of two undergraduate representatives to the Board of Visitors and Governors, I had the opportunity to sit in on the Enrollment Committee report during the board meeting this past weekend. The Enrollment Committee has recently been re-configured, subsuming the Retention Subcommittee that formerly reported to the Visiting Committee. The board remains committed to increasing the college's retention rate, but the focus of the Enrollment Committee will prioritize more rigorous strategies for marketing and admissions to address the decline in applicants which is predicted over the next few years. Already, this past year has seen a smaller freshman class than is desired, and the school is faced with the question of how to find new and creative ways to market St. John's to prospective applicants who already express an affinity for the program and its values.

Part of the marketing strategy involves a general push to spread awareness both locally and nationally about St. John's and the Great Books Program through appearances in the news, podcasts, and publications. It also involves more modern approaches to marketing through social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

The admissions team is seeking ways to draw in students with affinities for certain aspects of the program.

This includes targeting sources related to our studies at St. John's, such as advertising on subreddits for topics including Greek and Roman Mythology, Literature, History, and Philosophy. There are also efforts to market to students through pop culture references, such as Percy Jackson or Harry Potter. These marketing efforts pose an important question about what kind of public image will best communicate the spirit of St. John's to a generation of students increasingly unfamiliar with our model of education and increasingly more involved in popular culture and social media.

These efforts to reach a widening audience necessitate making important choices about who we are and how we can best express ourselves to the outside world. The marketing strategies that target students with particular interests must also make assumptions about what kind of students will enrich our communities and classrooms. The content we put out on social media, the messages we spread through our advertisements and programming, and the platforms that we choose as media for spreading awareness of our institution all impact how we are seen by the world and who we draw to St. John's—and it seems to me that these choices will have a significant impact on who we are as a college in the coming years. Though the job of crafting our public image lies with the BVG and the professionals responsible for marketing and admissions, the necessity of increasing the visibility of St. John's provides an important opportunity for us as students to reflect upon the image that we hope to share about our beloved college and the community of which we are a part. How do we capture the complexity of our community and program in a way that draws people in who will enrich our school and inspires upcoming generations to recognize value in the education that we provide? What might our responsibility be, as students and future alumni, to advocate for the continued growth and prosperity of our college and community, and spread an inspiring image of ourselves in the country and the world?

If you have any further questions about this issue or the recent meeting of the Board of Visitors and Governors, please reach out to me (Catherine Greer) or Millie Ransohoff!

Catherine Greer

This Week in Seminar

Freshman:

- Thursday, October 31: Plato: *Republic*, VIII–IX
- Monday, November 4: Plato: *Republic*, X

Sophomores:

- Thursday, October 31: *Bible*, Acts of the Apostles
- Monday, November 4: *Bible*, Gospel of John; First Letter of John

Juniors:

- Thursday, October 31: Preceptorial
- Monday, November 4: Preceptorial

Seniors:

- Thursday, October 31: Preceptorial
- Monday, November 4: Preceptorial

Friday Night Lecture:

"Know Thyself in Dialogue with Others: A Case for Cross-Cultural Philosophy" - Bret Davis

Upcoming Events:

Friday, November 1:

- JOC's 90's Kick Back, Boathouse, 9pm—12am

Saturday, November 2:

- Masquerade Waltz, Dining Hall, 9pm
- Poets in the Conversation Room - Remica Bingham-Risher, Conversation Room, 2pm

Monday, November 4:

- Monthly Music Mondays - "Sicut Cervus", Great Hall, 9:30pm—10:30pm

Wednesday, November 6:

- Life Skills 101: Creating a Routine for Success, Student Health and Wellness Center, 12pm

NOTES FROM THE BVG MEETING
Proposed Amendments to the “Polity” Document

In the Board of Visitors and Governors meeting this past weekend, discussion was held over amendments to a document called the Polity. This Polity, not to be confused with our term for the *polis* of our campus, functions as the principal governing document for the College and is reviewed every five years by the Board in consultation with our tutors. It was instituted during the change to the New Program in 1945 and is intended to represent the core values and aims of the College. As such, any amendments or changes to this document are incredibly relevant to our life on campus. Why do we do what we do here at St. John’s, and how should that be codified into a constitution-style document for Board members and the campus at large to follow?

The preamble to this 35-page document reads in part that “*St. John’s College strives to illuminate the common heritage of humanity in a persisting study of the great documents in which that heritage can be found. It is concerned with the unity of knowledge, an understanding of the great issues, and the moral foundations on which men and women may conduct their lives.*” With these goals in mind, the Board’s Polity Review Committee has proposed various amendments and a general restructuring of the entire document. If passed, this will be the most significant change to the Polity since its adoption in 1945. Originally the Board intended to vote on these amendments at this past weekend’s meeting, but this has been delayed until their February session.

Until February, then, we as a Polity have time to consider what the Polity is and ought to be, in both senses of the term. While the proposed amendments are not yet publicly available, the current iteration of the Polity document is freely accessible on the College website and quietly serves an essential role on how our campus is structured. It is important to note that we as students do not make this decision. We do not have a vote in the amending process, and as four-year Polity members who are not directly responsible for the fiscal and general upkeep of the College there is an argument to be made for this arrangement. Yet, these decisions do impact our beloved campus and our education, and with that in mind I ask my beloved Polity to keep itself familiar with the amendment process as it happens and stay in touch with this Johnnie constitution.

Reagan Bottomley

Aphorism of the Week

Τὴ ναύτη κυμαίνει ἡ ξηρά.

Tarik Mahmud

In Memory of Eva Brann
1929-2024

Eva Brann, beloved SJC alumna, dean, and tutor emerita, passed away on Monday, October 28 at the age of 95, after more than 60 years of serving this college. The following is an excerpt from a lecture she gave in 1967 called “The Student’s Problem.” (The problem in question is “melancholy.”)

“I cannot resolve this, the problem of my lecture and the question in my mind. I herewith hand it over to you, without, of course, myself relinquishing it. The study of the liberal arts, which are public and adequate learning procedures, and of their fruits, which are the various bodies of knowledge, as well as the absorption of the reflective tradition which is based on them, can only provide materials, tools and a language for questioning; the love of wisdom itself cannot be gained by study; and for that portion of our life of learning in which our unknown source fails us— for it is more arduous to maintain the condition of openness than a state of levitation— we must expect to be sometimes prey to the mortal’s malady, the confusion of the soul induced by the futile passing of precious time. But in this understanding of that sickness there is implicit the suggestion of a cure: to fix stubbornly and determinedly on that present preparation, that acquisition of the problem-solving arts and the problem-posing tradition, which is certainly at least a pre-condition of a questioning life, a life worth living.”

The full lecture transcript is in the library.

RENDELMAN RUNDOWN
A New Intramural Sport: Goaltimate Frisbee

Three weeks ago, we saw a change to our intramural sport line-up. Now that every team has completed round robins in all three sports, Ultimate, Outdoor handball and Soccer, there has been one major change and two minor. Beginning with the minor changes, Soccer is being played primarily on the lower field and handball has moved indoors. The lower field is slightly larger than the upper field, which does not have a huge impact on the games, but is a factor to consider. Handball moving indoors makes the court smaller and dribbling a more consistent part of the strategy.

Now onto the major change: Ultimate Frisbee has been replaced by a new frisbee game—Goaltimate Frisbee. In short, Goaltimate is like the half-court basketball of Frisbee. There are four players on the field from each team (two A-team and two B-team), subbing is continuous, and the game is divided into forty-minute halves. There are a few things that I believe to be crucial to a successful Goaltimate game: well-executed subbing and accurately placed players. Goaltimate is a fast-paced game that ultimately involves less running and is more accessible than Ultimate frisbee. With the A-team and B-team aspect of our program it is important that the captains place players accurately.

When done right, it creates an even matchup and more fun play. However, with fewer on the field at a time there are less play opportunities than with Ultimate and thus there is a lot of down time. But despite the subbing struggles, increased down time, and A and B team discrepancy, the overwhelming polity opinion tends positive towards Goaltimate. Perhaps a suggestion, next year let’s start with Goaltimate and work our way towards the more difficult Ultimate Frisbee. Goaltimately it was a successful Goaltimate experiment.

Lainey Rendelman



Above: Danny Ma (Greenwave, '26) makes a throw.
Below: Elena Molinar (Guardian, '27) celebrates a
goaltimate score.
Photos by Lainey Rendelman.



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 sjc.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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