



## JUDICIAL COUNCIL

*University of Notre Dame*

3 March 2022

Members of the Student Senate:

The Student Union Ethics Commission is pleased to present its nominee for the Michael J. Palumbo Award. This award, named in honor of its first recipient, honors an undergraduate student for his or her outstanding dedication and service to the University of Notre Dame's Student Union. The nominee must also have demonstrated outstanding character in the best tradition of Notre Dame, have faithfully upheld the Constitution of the Undergraduate Student Body, and have performed services so as to greatly further the causes of the Student Union. It is with great pleasure that we present Thomas Davis II as the nominee for this year's Michael J. Palumbo Award.

This year, nominations for Thomas poured in from both inside the Student Union—coming from no less than four different branches—and from outside the Student Union. The volume of submissions recommending Thomas for the Palumbo Award is significant in its own right, but the glowing praise of his nominators is even more impressive. Thomas's dedication to the Student Union and its Constitution is immediately apparent to anyone who has worked with him; in the words of one nominator, "He blew everyone out of the water for the simple reason that he felt a calling to serve, and I've never before or since met a better exemplar of service to the Student Union."

One of the most significant manners in which Thomas served the Student Union came with the unprecedented arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, which rendered much of the Constitution untenable. As another nominator stated, "In 2020, as Student Union Parliamentarian, Thomas bridged divides between in-person and physical Senate procedure and between the administrations of Elizabeth Boyle and Rachel Ingal. After students were sent home, Thomas managed to guide the Senate through the final business of the 2019-2020 term." If anything, this praise is understated; the Commission credits Thomas's leadership as the primary reason the Student Union was even able to function in the midst of COVID-19.

This was not the last time that circumstances thrust Thomas into a position of even greater leadership than he already exercised. Last year, Thomas took over as Judicial Council President immediately before the Student Body Election cycle—by far the most intense and sleepless period for Judicial Council—without previous experience managing elections. In the words of another nominator, "He never once complained about the work he chose to put in to ensure that integrity was upheld and everyone got their voice," both during this highly successful election and afterwards.

This year, as Off Campus Council President, Thomas has continued to take on more than his share of work to contribute to the Student Union. Even beyond his work that is specific to Off Campus Council, Thomas continues to author legislation and serve on the Committee on the Constitution. Additionally, he has expanded Off Campus Council's budget by a factor of four, initiating an increase

in programming for off campus students. As yet another nominator describes, Thomas's character has shone through in this position, as he "created an initiative for Off-Campus Council to put all of the funds toward local/Michiana businesses in order to foster a strong off-campus community and help local institutions financially recover from covid-19."

Thomas's character as Off Campus Council President, Judicial Council President, and Parliamentarian—not to mention the numerous other positions he has held—is matched by his integrity, faithfulness, and service outside of these institutions. Thomas exemplifies "outstanding character in the best tradition of Notre Dame" through the friendships he has forged and the communities he has affected, including at Dunne Hall. Through the stories of Thomas's nominators from Dunne, his strong Catholic faith and community ties are manifest. As one such nominator recounts, "Despite now living off campus, he is a consistent attendee of Mass in Dunne and continues to be an active participant in other faith-based activities. Another nominator praises "his piety," saying that "he consistently shows up to both Sunday and Tuesday Mass in Dunne," and adding, "In all my interactions with Thomas, I have always felt understood, welcomed, and valued."

One final nominator summarized Thomas's merits. "I can think of no better man to receive this award both in regard to his character and his meticulous nature in bettering the world around him." Due to Thomas's exemplary service, expertise, leadership, and character, the Ethics Commission agrees, and unanimously nominates Thomas Davis II for the 2022 Michael J. Palumbo Award.

Respectfully submitted,

*Chair, David Haungs*