

# Developments — Spring 2023, Volume 37 Issue 2



A Semesterly publication of the Department of Student Affairs in  
Higher Education for SPS/SAHE alumni and friends

## 2023 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient Julene Pinto-Dyczewski

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*Please let us know what you think about Developments. Your feedback and suggestions are welcome and greatly appreciated.*

The Department of Student Affairs in Higher Education is pleased to announce Julene (Jules) Pinto-Dyczewski as the 2023 recipient of the Ronald Lunardini Distinguished Alumni Award.

Pinto-Dyczewski is a 1989 graduate of the SAHE (then Student Personnel Services) program and currently serves as the Associate Director of Residence Life and Training and Leadership Development Specialist at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She has worked at IUP for 33 years in residence life since graduating.

Through numerous letters of support for her nomination, it was clear that Pinto-Dyczewski has had an extraordinary impact on the students and staff that she works with. One alumnus noted, "Jules is a fierce

advocate for students, always looking for ways to best support students in their development and create inclusive communities. Jules is passionate and committed to creating programs and environments that impact the retention and success of students." A current IUP faculty member in another department wrote "Jules is not simply a staff member to these students, but a supportive, welcoming, and trustworthy figure who by example, demonstrates the importance of compassion, care, and kindness in our daily interactions with others. In short, she is a true role model for students, and leading by example." A former graduate assistant noted that "Not only is she an excellent mentor and role model, but she is also a fierce and passionate professional who has made her mark on the student affairs field. She is hardworking, dedicated, compassionate, driven, student-centered, and innovative, and I can never thank her enough for being an integral part in shaping me into the professional I am today."

The award selection committee (comprised of SAHE faculty, students, and alumni) found that she meets and exceeds the award criteria. The award will be presented to Pinto-Dyczewski at a future SAHE departmental event.

The Ronald Lunardini Distinguished Alumni Award, begun in 2006, was created to acknowledge an alumna/alumnus of the SAHE department whose experiences and accomplishments as a student affairs professional significantly reflect the standards and values of the SPS program/SAHE Department. In 2008, in recognition of Dr. Lunardini's 37 years of service at IUP (18 as a SAHE faculty member), the award title was changed to honor him. Here is more information on the [Ronald Lunardini Distinguished Alumni Award](#) and a complete list of previous award recipients.



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# Celebrating the Class of 2023



Want to learn more  
about our graduates? You  
can view their resumes  
[here!](#)



# Chair's Corner

Greetings from SAHE!

I hope that each of you is having a great semester and enjoying the arrival of spring. It seems to have finally arrived, and with it, blooming flowers and the greening of the Oak Grove after the dull colors of winter. This proved to be yet another relatively mild winter in Western Pennsylvania in terms of snow.

This has been a busy spring semester. Like many of our peers in Pennsylvania and nationally, COVID has a long tail in terms of its impact on applications to graduate preparation programs. We have strong candidates this year, but there are clearly fewer of them than before the pandemic. This makes your help with admissions even more important. We had made the decision to continue with a virtual Visitation experience which allows prospective students to participate at a far lower cost while also drastically decreasing the effort required to offer the program, which is important with fewer people to share the work.

With the spring semester also comes the conference season, and I had the opportunity to talk with a number of SAHE alumni at ASCA in Portland and NASPA in Boston where we held a reception with the Division of Student Affairs. SAHE was very well represented at NASPA. Both Mimi Benjamin and I had several conference presentations. We also presented together on the uses of case studies in student affairs preparation and training, which considered both current uses as well as case studies from the 1950s. We were represented at ACPA in New Orleans by John Mueller who remains active in the Senior Scholars and several current students. It does seem that our student affairs conferences are approaching their pre-pandemic numbers.

You can read more about the 2023 graduates by visiting: <https://www.iup.edu/sahe/about/about-our-graduates/>. I encourage you to review their resumes and share this information with others who are looking for great new professionals to hire.

There are several other ways in which you can support the SAHE program. First, please continue to encourage your best and brightest students to pursue a career in student affairs that begins at IUP. You can also assist the SAHE program through your financial contributions to the SAHE Development Fund, which helps to support events such as our alumni reception at NASPA and our student awards. Donation directions appear on [page 5](#).

I mentioned in my fall letter that Margaret is now a freshman at the University of South Carolina. She had a very successful fall semester and is becoming more involved on campus. She is working in the admissions call center and was recently selected to serve as vice president of the Admissions Student Council.

I sincerely hope that this newsletter finds you well! Please continue to share your news and updates with us. We deeply appreciate your continued hard work, support, and loyalty to SAHE.

Best wishes,



John Wesley Lowery

Professor and SAHE Department Chair



# Dr. Mimi Benjamin



We're in Week 7 as I write this, and we're having an unusually warm day for early spring. It's a reminder of what's to come – longer days, greener everything, annual conferences, and the excitement of celebrating another successful year in SAHE. Our students have been working hard throughout the semester, and I know they (and their faculty!) are looking forward to Spring Break. Spring Break for me mostly means catching up! This year, while I'm teaching some of my usual courses (Management of Organizational Behavior and Practicum), I've picked up the Individual and Group Interventions course that John Mueller taught for many years. Fortunately for me, John left excellent materials for this really important course. But like anything that you're doing for the first time, or the first time in a very long time, I feel like I'm just able to stay a step or two ahead of the class. Fingers crossed that next year will feel a bit different. In Management, we've taken on a new and interesting class project. Students are on committees and are creating a Student Employee Supervisors' Manual for the Office of Human Resources at IUP. I think

that students are finding the experience valuable as they think about their future roles as supervisors. Students also have been actively engaged in helping us recruit new SAHE students. In particular, Marc Vukotich ('23), Kayla Mikesell ('23), Bethany Jacobs ('24), Casey Brown ('24), and I have been visiting various student organizations' meetings this spring to share information about the SAHE program. While lots of students come to college knowing they want to be a teacher, nurse, accountant, etc., almost no one comes to college thinking, "I want to be a college administrator!" So we've decided that we need to spread the word about the field of student affairs and the IUP SAHE program. We hope you've been spreading the word about IUP SAHE, too!

On the professional front, I am wrapping up the new living-learning communities book that I've been writing with my colleagues Dr. Karen Inkelas and Dr. Jody Jessup-Anger. While the book is near completion, a title for it eludes us for some reason, but I'll be sure to share it when we figure that out. A book chapter on faculty involvement in living-learning communities, which I co-authored with Dr. Jody Jessup-Anger, was recently published in *The Faculty Factor: Developing Faculty Engagement with Living Learning Communities*. My living-learning community research has also expanded to a study of a Sport Management and Media Living-Learning Community with colleagues from Elon University, where I spent my sabbatical last spring. And my work on an international study of peer mentoring through the Elon University Center for Engaged Learning Research Seminar will wrap up later this year.

On a personal note, I'm eager to plant my garden and flowers, sit on my back porch, and do some "fun" reading. I will be attending the NASPA conference in Boston and hope to cross paths with SAHE alums and friends. As we look toward summer, I hope you've had a productive spring semester and that your summer is fun and as relaxing as possible!



# Dr. Amber Racchini

I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying the sunshine and nervous anticipation of the end of another academic year! I am looking forward to the summer and grilling out with family and friends, running in the sunshine, and spending quality time with Jim and Lucas.

This academic year has continued to present many challenges, including declining enrollment and budget shortfalls. Although these challenges are difficult to navigate, the campus community has come together to focus on creating a new infrastructure for student success. Working collaboratively on this new initiative gives me hope that IUP can become an even more student-centered institution next academic year.

This semester I am teaching Student Development Theory II for all of the first-year students. Not only is it exciting to experience their AHA! moments, but I also get to see them grow in their ability to apply theory to practice. I always feel rejuvenated when I get the opportunity to teach for SAHE, and this semester is even more special as Jeremy Risinger ('18) is co-teaching with me. I've enjoyed watching Jeremy (the soon-to-be Dr.) grow as an educator and gain more confidence every week as he assists with planning class activities and teaching the ins and outs of cognitive development and person environment theories.

I am looking forward to celebrating the end of an academic year at SAHE graduation in a few short weeks! On a personal note, Jim, Lucas, and I are headed to LEGOLAND in May to celebrate Lucas' 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. I am still running and looking forward to my first half marathon of the year at Moraine State Park in April. I hope you all have a great summer!



## Giving to SAHE

The **Nancy Newkerk Scholarship** – Awarded to a second-year master's student whose contributions during the first year of their program demonstrated the greatest promise for the profession of student affairs. **(Acct #0374)**

The **Hadley Outstanding Student** – established to recognize outstanding 2nd year students on the basis of academic performance and professional involvement in the SAHE program. **(Acct #0140)**

The **SAHE Development Fund** – Supports the needs of the SAHE program that are not covered by funds from the University (e.g., student support for professional development activities, research support to students, Outstanding Scholar Award, Outstanding SAHE Alumni award). **(Acct # 4647)**

1. Visit [www.iup.edu/giveagift](http://www.iup.edu/giveagift) and enter the amount you wish to give.
2. Click the box labeled "Click here to view other university-wide funds or to support more than one area," "Click "Other" in the "Other critical needs at IUP" and click continue.
3. Enter your amount (if this is the only gift you are giving, it will be the same as when you originally entered it and will be 100% of your gift). Finally, enter the account number where it asks to specify the designation, then complete the remainder of the form.

The Foundation for IUP is a 501(c)(3) organization; gifts to the Foundation are tax deductible as per IRS regulations. The official registration and financial information of the Foundation for Indiana University of Pennsylvania may be obtained for the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. For calls which originate outside of Pennsylvania, the telephone number is 717-783-1720. Registration does not imply endorsement.

# Alumni Updates

## Professional

**Michael Dodge** ('06) is serving as Interim Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer at American International College.

**Kellie McKinney** ('06) is an Assistant Professor and Director for the Master of Arts Organizational Leadership program at Rider University.

**Amanda Ries** ('06) was promoted to Director of Residence Life at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh campus, having previously served the department as the Assistant Director of Residence Life for Academic Initiatives.

**Sandra Alef** ('07) is the Director of Residence Life at the University of Detroit Mercy.

**Amanda Anderson** ('07) is a Client Experience/Business Development Associate with Nonprofit HR.

**Matthew Landy** ('08) is the Director of the Office of Student Conduct at the University of Pittsburgh.

**Jennifer Pruzinsky** ('08) was recently promoted to Assistant Director of Student Services and Enrollment Management at WVU Online.

**Kelly Ogiba** ('11) is a Senior Program Manager at Amazon.

**Andee Fisher** ('12) is serving as the NACA Mid Atlantic Events Team Lead for 2023 and was selected as a LeaderShape Institute facilitator.

**Trista Shideler** ('13) is the Associate Director of New Student Programs in the Office of Academic Advising at Stanford University.

**Lexie Elliot** ('14) was recently appointed a Province President for Zeta Tau Alpha to support chapters (advisors & students) in West Virginia and South Western PA.

**Jess Tallant** ('17) is the Associate Director of Orientation and Transition Programs at the University of Oregon.

**Asanté Littleton** ('19) is the Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives at the University of North Carolina.

**Anthony Nguyen** ('19) became a member of the Canadian Association of College & University Student Services.

**Sarah Avery** ('20) is an Academic Advisor in the Information Systems Department at Carnegie Mellon University.

**Chandler Stafford** ('21) is a Transfer Coordinator in the Undergraduate Admissions and Orientation Office at University of Maryland Baltimore County.

**Karis Cornelius** ('22) is a Global Advising Specialist in the Center for Global Engagement at Robert Morris University.

## Awards

**Tom Baker** ('05) received the Ross Township Durachko-Gottfried Citizen of the Year Award and was selected for the Multiplying Good 2023 Changemakers Class.

**Kellie McKinney** ('06) is the recipient of the Larry Marcus Award for Excellence in Educational Leadership (2022); had a research paper accepted at ASHE (November 2022); and is presenting at AERA in April 2023.

**Joe Benyish** ('12) received the NACA - National Association for Campus Activities Legacy Award.

**Abby Gontis** ('22) was accepted to be a part of the 2024 ACPA Convention Attendee Experience Team.

## Personal

**Kellie McKinney** ('06) received her doctorate in Educational Leadership from Rowan University.

**Robyn Stuart** ('09) along with husband, David Stuart Jr., and son, Johnathan, welcomed baby Maggie to our family on January 25.

**Daniel Percopo-Meany** ('12) got married on November 6, 2022 to partner Kyle Percopo-Meany.

**Melissa Hunter** ('16) and her husband welcomed their second baby girl, Mackenzie, in February 2023.

**Jess Tallant** ('17) and partner Raul purchased their first home in December 2022.



# SAHE at NASPA

The SAHE Department was well represented at the 2023 NASPA Conference in Boston. NASPA is the largest student affairs professional organization and the annual conference was attended by almost 6,000 in person participants.

Dr. John Wesley Lowery presented a full day pre-conference workshop, *A Higher Education Case Law and Legislative Update*, with W. Scott Lewis, Saunie Schuster, and Daniel Swinton of TNG. He also presented *Guns on Campus: The Courts, State Legislatures, and Campus Consequences* with W. Scott of TNG and Marjorie D. Sanfilippo, Eckerd College. Along with Dr. Mimi Benjamin, he presented *Using Case Studies in the Preparation and Training of Student Affairs Educators*. Lowery also serves as NASPA Historian and chairs the History Advisory Board.

In addition to her presentation with Dr. Lowery, Dr. Mimi Benjamin presented *The Art of Living in Student Affairs: Self-Care/Well-Being and the Student Affairs Life* with Jon Dooley, Hannah Clayborne, and IUP Vice President for Student Affairs Tom Segar. She also presented *Sense of Belonging Through Peer Supports for Students of Color*, and with Jon Dooley, Cara Lucia, and Naeemah Clark presented *Fostering a Campus Culture of Academic and Student Affairs Partnerships*.

SAHE also co-sponsored a reception with the Division of Student Affairs to reconnect with program alumni and participated in the NASPA Graduate Preparation Program Fair.



## SAHE at ACPA



*Justin Lew '23, Abby Mozler, Samantha Fuller '24, CeCelia Martz '23, Madison Kiser '24*

The SAHE Department also had a presence at the 2023 ACPA Conference in New Orleans. In addition to four current students who attended, retired faculty member Dr. John Mueller presented, and was also joined by some alumni of the program.

John Mueller co-presented a Senior Scholars sponsored-session titled "Making and Protecting Time for Scholarship" with Dr. Eboni Zamani-Gallaher of the University of Pittsburgh.

Second year student CeCe Martz talked about some of the highlights of the conference being “the opportunity to connect with lots of alumni, especially those who have had the same experience in their practicum or assistantship. The moments connecting with other SAHE alumni is so impactful and helps you remember the rich tradition and huge community we have”.

Justin Lew, another second year student said they “loved being able to reconnect with and meet SAHE alumni and network with other professionals, attend a variety of sessions on topics including managing burnout, being an introvert in an extroverted world, utilizing food pantries, creating public spaces that support student development, leadership and advising practices, and creating a work-life balance. In addition to the formal ACPA events, I felt like the conference also brought the current SAHE students that went closer together.”



*Brandon Ford '19, Dr. John Mueller, Kristen Shimko '20*



# NACADA Region 2 Conference Graduate Student Scholarship



*Marc Vukotich '23 accepting the NACADA Region 2 Graduate Student Scholarship Award*

Marc Vukotich, second-year student in the Student Affairs in Higher Education master's program, was the recipient of a regional graduate student scholarship from NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. This scholarship recognizes graduate students who are pursuing new or continued careers in the field of academic advising and are seeking to become involved or further involved in NACADA Region 2. The scholarship allowed Vukotich to attend the March 15-17, 2023, Region 2 Conference in Maryland. The theme for this year's regional conference was "All In on Students: Advising, Engaging, and Supporting Today's Students."

About his experience, Vukotich stated, "I really enjoyed getting to connect with academic advisors at the conference from across Region 2 to create my own professional network. The knowledge and skills I gained from various sessions are things I can bring back to both the SAHE community and to my first professional experience. I look forward to continuing to be involved in NACADA and to present myself one day!"

The [NACADA website](#) explains, "NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising is an association of professional advisors, counselors, faculty, administrators, and students working to enhance the educational development of students."

IUP is part of NACADA Mid-Atlantic Region 2, which serves Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington, DC.



*Carrie Egnosak '05 and Marc Vukotich '23*



# Brandon Sousa ('17) Receives COEC IMPACT Award



Each year, the College of Education and Communications (COEC) presents the IMPACT Award to alumni from each department in recognition of outstanding achievements in their profession, their engagement with IUP, and/or their leadership in their discipline or community. We honored these respected and accomplished members of the IUP community with a celebration luncheon on April 12, 2023. This year, the Student Affairs in Higher Education Department recipient was Brandon Sousa ('17).

Brandon serves as a Career Coach and Instructor in the Center for Career and Experiential Education at the University of Rhode Island, where he works with 2,500 students with majors in arts and humanities, while also serving undeclared students. His work includes coordinating networking events, career fairs, and workshops as well as developing materials ranging from interactive professional development modules to handouts that educate students on topics such as networking, interviewing, career exploration, and professional development. Brandon is also a certified

Gallup Strengths Coach, a skill he uses in teaching an online CliftonStrengths Career and Professional Development course.

As a SAHE student, Brandon's graduate assistantship was in the Academic Success Center at the University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown, where he advised undeclared students, supervised student mentors, assisted provisionally admitted first-year students, and taught a career exploration course. He also served as a mock interviewer for IUP's Career and Professional Development Center and held a practicum in that office as well as completing a NODA internship at Bethune-Cookman University.

Since he graduated, Brandon has coordinated the SAHE Alumni Connect Mentoring Program that pairs second-year Associates for Student Development (ASD) members with recent alums who can specifically relate to students' final year in the program and transition from graduate school to full-time professional work since their own transition was recent. Each year, Brandon coordinates the outreach to both students and alums, works with the current ASD president in matching students with their alumni mentor, and provides guidance for the mentoring relationship through email communication and a program handbook he created.

About his SAHE experience, Brandon stated, "When I think back to my experience, I'm using a lot of the knowledge and skill sets I acquired from the program in my day to day work. Not only am I able to use my experiences and skill sets, but the connections I've made from the program have continued to be strong and I'm so grateful for all of them."

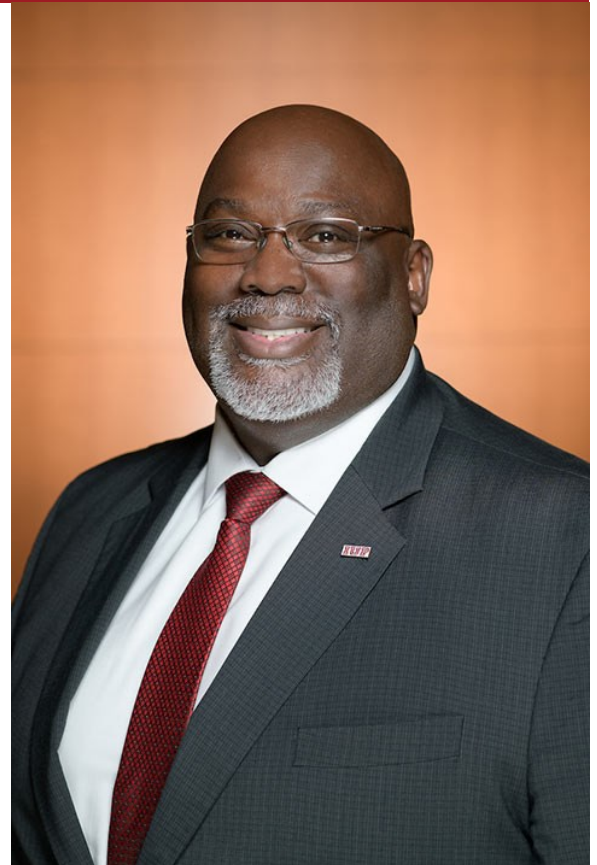


## Spring 2023 SAHE Departmental...

# Gratitude GO Arounds

At the start of each class, Dr. Mimi Benjamin conducts a “Gratitude Go Around” where students share what in the past week made them feel appreciative or has benefited their general wellness. As the end of the semester approaches, the Department of Student Affairs in Higher Education has a lot for which to be grateful. Among the top of this list, the department has enjoyed and is thankful for the support of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Thomas Segar.

Dr. Segar serves as the advisor for the Associates for Student Development and provides valuable guidance to the executive board team. Beyond his advisory responsibilities, Dr. Segar makes demonstrable efforts to connect with individual students and frequently attends events and supports programs run by SAHE students. His dedication to student success university-wide clearly extends to students in our department. Abreeya Darda—a student in her second year—noted that “Dr. Segar has been an important mentor in my life and the lives of many students in the 2023 and 2024 cohorts.”





“ I am most grateful for the genuine conversations during our class sessions, everyone brings so much to the table from years of experiences, lessons, and just doing life. I am so honored to learn from and alongside such a great group of professionals. ”

-Bethany Jacobs '24

“ I am grateful for all of the great people I've had the pleasure of meeting and interacting with this year. ”

-Scott Florence '23



“I am most grateful for my cohort and the one above me. They inspire me to keep going and help me stay grounded as I manage the end of my first year as a grad student.”

-Madison Kiser '24

“This semester I am incredibly grateful for the friends and connections SAHE has brought me, especially as my time here comes to a close.”

-Pia St. Pierre '23

“I am grateful for IUP Student Co-op Association Fitness Center. The resources there help me put my mind in order and connect with my cohort. I have been introducing everyone to racquetball!”

-Bennett Nesley '23

“The moment that I am most grateful for in the spring 2023 semester is traveling to New Orleans Louisiana with my SAHE friends from both cohorts.”

-CeCelia Martz '23

## Gratitude from the 2023 & 2024 Cohorts

"I'm grateful for my dog always being there for me when I get home from work or class. Taking her for walks has been some of my best self-care this entire program, but it has been really nice with how busy the Spring semester has been!"

-Marc Vukotich '23

"I am grateful for everyone in our cohort. I know that if I need anything, they will be there for me and will help me get through any problem."

-Matthew Grayo '23

This semester I was most grateful for the opportunity to see my sister during Spring Break. Living a few hours away has made trips home difficult but I am grateful that my family has been able to help remind me to take breaks, make calls home, and relax!

-Lindsay Aurand '24



" I am most grateful for all the members of the first and second-year cohorts. They have all been so supportive and encouraging, and I cannot thank them enough. "

—Maddie Forbes '24

" I am most grateful for the wonderful relationships I have built in the SAHE program so far; as they have helped me to develop and thrive in this new environment. Maddie Forbes and Bethany Jacobs have been my biggest cheerleaders and confidants, Dr. Tom Segar has been an incredible mentor, and the SAHE faculty have gifted me with their knowledge and expertise. I couldn't be more thankful for everyone's guidance, mentorship, and support! "

- Casey Brown '24



# Associates for Student Development

The 2023 Associates for Student Development (ASD) Executive Board has been working to continue vital SAHE traditions that support the continued growth and development of our program. We kicked off the Spring 2023 Semester with the “100 Days Celebration” to commemorate the second-year students having only 100 days left in the program. Pizza, gift baskets of office supplies and framed photos, and words from Dr. Benjamin were shared in Stouffer 227. Our Vice President of Communications proceeded with collecting resumes from the second year SAHE students for the “Resume Project” to assist in their job searches. During SAHE Visitation this semester, the ASD Executive Board planned a virtual event to welcome potential new students to the program. We played virtual games and had several breakout sessions about the different types of assistantships and what it is like to be a SAHE student at IUP.

The Vice President for Professional Development has been working with our alumni to put on several “Panel of Professionals” events. SAHE students heard from alumni Tom Baker on the importance and best practices of networking, as well as alumni Lauren Tudor on how to best navigate the first year after graduate school. A very special thank you to Tom and Lauren for sharing their expertise with us. We also want to thank the 50+ alumni who have responded to our call for sharing with us. The ASD Executive Board is working to find ways to utilize all your talents. Additionally, professional development opportunities will be made available to our new first year cohort this summer and beyond! Our Vice President of Programming held a bowling night at Mohawk Lanes that ended with Meadow’s ice cream. Speaking of The Meadow’s, our Vice President of Membership and Finance set up a fundraiser with The Meadow’s to raise funds for continued support of ASD.

In the last few weeks of the Spring 2023 Semester, we will be participating in Take Back the Night at IUP and supporting the work of IUP Haven Project. ASD also looks forward to celebrating the second-years accomplishments with the annual “SAHE Banquet” on Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup> in the Great Room of Elkin Hall. Dinner will be served, awards will be presented to deserving SAHE graduates, and Pia St. Pierre— the class speaker will deliver their address. After the banquet will be a SAHE Prom, to close out the 2023 Academic Year!

Looking forward to the Summer and Fall Semesters, ASD and the current first year cohort are excited to welcome the Class of 2025! We are excited to commence the annual “Cohort Connect” project so our new students will have mentors to guide them in their transition to graduate school. We also look forward to the annual “SAHE Kick-Off” and “SAHE Thanksgiving” and are excited to share more during the Fall 2023 Developments. Until then, we thank you all for support, and be sure to connect with us on Instagram @iupsahe.asd or via email at [iupsahe.asd@gmail.com](mailto:iupsahe.asd@gmail.com)!



*From left to right: Re’Onna Durham ’24 (VP of Professional Development), Jacob Sears ’24 (VP of Programming), Bethany Jacobs ’24 (VP of Membership and Finance), Maddie Forbes ’24 (VP of Communication), and Casey Brown ’24 (President)*

*Contributed by Casey Brown – ASD President*

## A Note from the Editors

Hi all! As the spring semester, and our two years in the program, come to a close, we want to take a moment to thank our SAHE faculty, alumni, and current students for all of their contributions that allowed us to bring you this issue of *Developments*. We would like to especially thank Dr. Mimi Benjamin for her guidance and for allowing us to take on this project this year.

- Kayla Mikesell and Bennett Nesley

