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## **Student Government Association: Annual Report 2022-2023 Academic Year**

**(West Chester, PA - April 5, 2023):** With the 2022-2023 Academic Year coming to a close, it is time to reflect on the year and take a look at the student achievements of the Student Government Association (SGA) of West Chester University. With this academic year being the first of its kind to return to normalcy following the Covid-19 pandemic, there was an emphasis on rebuilding the student leadership community and actively engaging in conversations for the betterment of the WCU community.

The Executive Board of the Student Government Association consists of seven members, President Catherine Young, Vice President Karen Mercy, Treasurer Kate Spaulding, Secretary Sierra Irving, Parliamentarian Brenna McGowan, Public Relations Officer Jasmine Stewart, and Student Trustee Julie Ward, and two faculty advisors Patricia Riley, Associate Director of Student Leadership and Involvement, and Kimmy Farrer, Assistant Director of Student Leadership and Involvement.

This year SGA held 22 meetings with opportunities for any student to get involved, share their opinions, and learn about what is happening across campus. Senators submitted 95 reports pertaining to work they are doing in their respective areas as well as sharing out information that happened in their meetings. Senators also meet weekly within one of our SGA Committees: Finance Committee, Bylaw Review Committee, Public Relations Committee, and Outreach Committee.

### **Welcome Week**

In the early months of the academic year, this year's Executive Board hosted Spring and Fall Senator Elections filling approximately 80% of the Senate before the summer. Throughout the semester there have been ebbs and flows leaving SGA with the realization that finding new ways to engage with students and their behavior is different coming off of the pandemic and returning to full normalcy.

During Welcome Week, an annual event held by the Office of New Student Programs, SGA held a table at the Wellness Fair on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022 for first-year students. Our "Join us for Jenga"

table featured two Jenga sets with information regarding SGA and advocacy on the pieces along with a large Jenga set to get student involvement. During the traditional first-year class photo, President Young gave a speech to welcome the new students to encourage them to reach out, be a friend, and spread kindness. After the photo, a Kona Ice Truck sponsored by SGA was available for students to enjoy.



*SGA President, Catherine Young, after giving her opening remarks to welcome the 2022 first-year class.*



*Group photo featuring the 2022-2023 SGA Senate.*

Leading up to the PA 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Elections, Claire Shutack and Gabriella Trotman, the chairs of SGA's Outreach Committee worked with the League of Women Voters of Chester County (LWVCC) to have guest speakers on campus. Pennsylvania State Representative candidates, Chrissy Houlahan (D), and Guy Ciarrocchi (R), each came to campus for a Q&A discussion and open forum with students.

## **Town Hall (Fall & Spring)**

Towards the end of the Fall 2022 Semester, this Executive Board hosted their first Town Hall of the school year. The Town Hall is a biannual student run event focused on creating solutions for areas of improvement on campus. These were the first in person Town Hall's since before Covid-19 allowing room for open discourse between students and administration.



*Fall 2022 Town Hall. President Young and Cabinet on stage.*

The first Town Hall occurred on Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 7:15 pm in Sykes Theater. President Young moderated the event with the panelist including:

- President Christopher Fiorentino
- Senior Vice President and Provost Dr. Jeffrey Osgood
- Interim Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Tabettha Adkins
- Vice President for Finance and Administration Mr. Todd Murphy
- Chief of Staff Mr. Andy Lehman
- Vice President for Advancement and External Affairs Dr. Zebulun Davenport
- Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dr. Tracey Robinson
- Chief of Campus Police Mr. Ray Stevenson

The Town Hall had over 150 students in attendance with many other faculty and staff in the audience to gain information. The format of the Town Hall allows students to submit questions ahead of time on RamConnect. There were over 100 questions submitted in advance with topics ranging from Dining Services, Parking and Public Safety, and use of space on campus. There was time at the end of students to ask questions from the audience directly to the panel. Some of these questions pertained to student fees, food waste, and scholarships.

The second Town Hall took place on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 7:15 pm in Sykes Theater. With the same set up as the fall Town Hall, President Young moderated the event with the following panel:

- President Christopher Fiorentino
- Senior Vice President and Provost Dr. Jeffrey Osgood
- Interim Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Tabettha Adkins
- Vice President for Finance and Administration Mr. Todd Murphy
- Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dr. Tracey Robinson

Other members of the Cabinet were present in the audience along with faculty and staff. Over 160 students were in attendance and over 80 questions or concerns were submitted in advance. The housing crisis was at the forefront, questions regarding other topics were answered first with Parking & Public Safety, Academic Affairs, and Facilities leading pack.



*SGA Executive Board (left to right) Brenna McGowan, Julie Ward, Karen Mercy, Catherine Young, Jasmine Stewart, Sierra Irving, and Kate Spaulding.*

President Fiorentino gave remarks about the ongoing housing crisis giving numbers, backstory, and the current plan for what is being done before moving to housing related questions. Following some of the questions asked at the Town Hall, new bench presses have been ordered for the Recreation Center on campus, additional hand sanitizing stations have been added to the Commons Dining Hall, Freshens, and in the Francis Harvey Green (FHG) Library on the first floor, as well as the President's Breakfast making a return. With the large amount of questions and discourse throughout the night, there was not time for live questions from the audience at the Spring Town Hall.

### **SGA Budgeting Process**

SGA Treasurer, Kate Spaulding, chairs the Finance Committee to work throughout the year educating students on the proper guidelines to submitting a budget proposal for the following year. The committee then works together to finalize budgets comprised of the Student Activity Fee.

The Financial Policies and Procedures (FPPs) is a document that outlines the budgeting process. This year the document was updated describing a new budgeting process, creating different budget requests deadlines for benchmarked amounts of money. In order to submit a budget, the Treasurer of an SGA funded club or organization must attend a Budgeting Q&A Session led by Treasurer Spaulding to learn how to submit a proper budget. There were # of Budgeting Q&A Sessions held this year.

There were three budget deadlines this Spring for clubs and organizations to follow if they would like to receive a budget for the 2023-2024 year. If an organization wanted to request more than \$10,000 their budgets were due

### **Auxiliary Requests and Sponsorships**

SGA has an auxiliary account with funds for clubs and organizations to utilize throughout the year for unplanned events. These requests are approved by the Finance Committee after hearing from the organization as to why they are requesting funds. This year there were 47 auxiliary requests submitted for \$ and Finance Committee allocated out \$ using % of their budget.

Some of the auxiliary requests helped fund events that were not necessarily planned for last year when budgets were created. High Street Harmonix, an a cappella group, received \$1,000 to fund microphones for an event with WCU and non WCU a cappella groups. Precise Fashion Organization received \$1,200 for their Spring Fashion Show and Gala to aid with photographers, costumes, and a DJ. Black Men United received \$750 to help fund their annual Sex Olympics event. This event creates a safe space to educate on safe and consensual sex and STDs. The Men's Wrestling team and Women's Volleyball team made it to Nationals this year and both received \$900 to cover travel and lodging expenses.

Throughout the year, SGA has the opportunity to sponsor many different events on campus by aiding financially. This year, SGA sponsored # of events and gave \$.

Gender Justice Conference	\$1,000
Banana Day	\$
Ramboree	\$4,000

### **Campus Wide Committees**

SGA Senators are actively serving on many different campus committees to help advocate for students and give the student perspective. This year SGA had members on 16 of committees across campus.

Elizabeth Uleau, Gender Equity Senator, serves on the Presidents Commission on the Status of Women (The Women's Commission). Their goal is to create a diverse forum of faculty, staff, and students to support women leadership, gender equity, and allow for equal opportunity for women to live, work, and study at West Chester University. They are currently planning a women's panel for students to talk to professionals about their experiences.

Elizabeth also serves on the Student and Community Engagement Committee to provide students with endless opportunities for success. This year they provided over \$2,000 to create two different internships.

Jacqueline Griffith, Curriculum and Academic Policies (CAPC) Senator, serves on the Undergraduate Programs Committee (UGPC). UGPC Is one of the final steps in the CAPC process of approving any edits to or new proposals or courses, programs, and classes at the undergraduate level. The council can approve new proposals for accelerated bachelors to masters programs. This year the UGPC looked at minor programs and reevaluating their requirements as well as editing courses and programs in the Wells School of Music to get reaccreditation.

Sarah Leszczewski, Faculty Relations Senator, serves on the Student Welfare Committee which raises awareness for student welfare and find ways to help students in their daily lives on campus

and in class. Some of the work they do involves collecting reports from students and faculty to see how we can better improve student welfare throughout the school community.

Claire Shutack, West Chester Community Senator, as well as Parliamentarian Brenna McGowan are members of the West Chester Community Campus Coalition (WCCCC). The mission of the WCCCC is to promote and increase communication and collaboration between Borough of West Chester community leaders and residents and West Chester University officials and students on issues that affect health, safety, and quality of life for the campus and Borough community. They did a lot of work regarding the MLB World Series and the NFL Super Bowl to ensure safety to all entities as well as planning for Welcome Week in August of 2023.

Layla Malik, Sustainability Senator, has worked with the Sustainability Council for the last two years. The Sustainability Council advocates involving resources, habitat, environmental racism, sustainable alternatives, and advocacy etc. The council is composed of several different committees and initiatives, anything from Zero Waste to Green Space and Tree Committee. We are involved we almost all the Sustainability projects on campus in one way or another. Some of the projects Layla has been apart of working on this year include the Sustainability Census, Brandywine Projects, Adopt-a-Spot, the first Zero Waste Summit during the Fall Semester, the Sustainability Showcase in the Spring Semester, helping to enforcing the West Chester plastic bag ban, and revising the WCU Sustainability Plan.

Caroline Colmary, Community Service Senator, serves on West Chester University's Service Council. The Service Council runs out of the Center for Civic Engagement and Social Impact to create and advertise service opportunities in and around the university.

Rachel Treffeisen, First Generation Senator, joined the First Generation Steering Committee that works to support and provide resources to all first generation students at West Chester University, as well as recognize their accomplishments throughout their time here at WCU. This year they inducted 90 students into Tri Alpha Honor Society, a first generation honor society.

Parliamentarian Brenna McGowan is also a member of the Parking Committee. This committee hears and decides on second level parking ticket appeals, discusses improvements and possible initiatives related to bettering the parking situation on campus.

### **New and Forming Organizations**

Our Parliamentarian, Brenna McGowan, chairs the Bylaw Review Committee which is an SGA Committee focused on working with new and forming clubs and organizations before presenting to the Senate for final approval. Brenna also works with the Office of Student Leadership and Involvement in this process. In the Fall 2022 Semester, #12 new clubs and organizations were

passed and in the Spring 2023 Semester, #11 new clubs and organizations we passed, leaving a total of 23 new clubs forms this year.

One of the new organizations passed was The Swift Society, an organization aimed towards bringing together students interested in musician Taylor Swift to enjoy her work, reflect on her cultural impact, and make friends along the way. Another club passed Out in STEM (oSTEM), an international, professional organization whose mission is to empower LGBTQ+ people in STEM fields to succeed academically, professionally, and personally by cultivating unique, safe, and uplifting spaces in campus communities. Lastly, Pakistani Student Association (PSA) which has a mission to represent the Pakistani Community on West Chester University's campus and to spread the diverse and rich culture of Pakistan.

Here is the full list of all 23 new clubs and organizations passed in the 2022-2023 year:

- Art History Social
- Step It Up Dance Club
- Island Vybz
- The Swift Society
- Adapted Physical Activity Club
- Underrepresented Genders in Physics
- West Chester Club Baseball
- Supply Chain and Business Intelligence Club
- Sustainable Fashion Club
- Environmental Health Club
- WCU Pageants Organization
- Pakistani Student Organization
- Food Systems Management Club
- Purple and Gold Productions
- Arabic Club
- Mock Trial
- Horn of Africa
- oStem
- Tennis Club
- Out-of-State Student Association
- Exercise is Medicine (On Campus)
- Inclusive Business Association
- Global Brigades

In conjunction with new and forming organizations, SGA created the New Org Fund. This fund allows new clubs and organizations that have been recognized by SGA to apply for up to \$500 for the academic year. This breaks down the barrier of them having to wait to receive funding until the next academic year so they can start growing this organization. # clubs have taken advantage of this new opportunity.

### **Congressional Candidate Visits**

Leading up to the PA 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Elections, Claire Shutack and Gabriella Trotman, the chairs of SGA's Outreach Committee worked with the League of Women Voters of Chester County (LWVCC) to have guest speakers on campus. Pennsylvania State Representative candidates, Chrissy Houlahan (D), and Guy Ciarrocchi (R), each came to campus for a Q&A discussion and open forum with students.



*Chrissy Houlahan after her Q&A discussion and open forum.*

**Board of Student Government Presidents**

The Board of Student Government Presidents (BSGP) is a PASSHE wide committee comprised of all SGA President’s across the state that meets monthly on Zoom. Every year, the BSGP plans a conference for all PASSHE SGA’s to attend. This year the BSGP Conference Chair was Darrek Harshberger, SGA President at PennWest California.



*Left to right: Emily Ayala-Ruiz, Annie Wineka, Claire Shutack, and Conor Gibson.*

The conference was another in person activity that was a first since Covid-19 and occurred at PennWest California from March 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> of 2023. Four Senators had the opportunity to travel to California, PA to attend the conference:

- Annie Wineka, College of Business & Public Management Senator
- Claire Shutack, West Chester Community Senator
- Conor Gibson, College of Education & Social Work Senator
- Emily Ayala-Ruiz, University College Senator

The theme of the conference was “Facing the Future – Together” and there were breakout sessions on how to be a better student advocate, marketing and event planning, and learning from others. The Senators brought back many ideas to implement in the future and help spread the word of the work that SGA is doing as well as continuing to rebuild the leadership community on campus.



## **Executive Board Elections**

In March of 2023, SGA held their 2023-2024 Executive Board Elections. Elections Committee was chaired by Curriculum and Academic Policy Senator, Jacqueline Griffith, and comprised of several other senators. The goal of the Elections Committee is to ensure a fair and equitable election for all candidates. They approve campaign material and work with the candidates through the application process as the main point of contact.

The Executive Board Debates occurred on Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:15 pm in Sykes Theater. All candidates had the opportunity to give opening and closing remarks and answer questions from the Elections Committee and the audience. Following the debates, voting opened on D2L from Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10 am to Friday March 24<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. The D2L webpage had biographies about all candidates for all undergraduate students to read and make an informed voting decision.

The voting ballot had the following students as candidates:

### President

- Alexandra Clancy

### Secretary

- Aliza Greenfield
- Sarah Leszczewski

### Vice President

- Claire Shutack
- Sierra Irving

### Parliamentarian

- Keilah Hanley

### Treasurer

- Caroline Colmary
- Jasmine Stewart

### Public Relations Officer

- Annie Wineka
- Calvin Sewell

Once the voting period ended, and Elections Committee receiving all votes the SGA Executive Board Elect has been announced. The 2023 Executive Board Elections had an all time record number of votes with over 700 students participating. Introducing the 2023-2024 Executive Board Elect:

- President Alexandra Clancy
- Vice President Sierra Irving
- Treasurer Jasmine Stewart
- Secretary Aliza Greenfield
- Parliamentarian Keilah Hanley
- Public Relations Officer Annie Wineka

For more information about Student Government Association please visit [www.wcupa.edu/sga](http://www.wcupa.edu/sga) or email Catherine Young, Public Relations Officer [CY926331@wcupa.edu](mailto:CY926331@wcupa.edu).

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### **About the Student Government Association**

Student Government Association is an inclusive student organization looking to project student concerns and bridge the gap between students and administrations. SGA is hard at work revising our bylaws and holding themselves accountable for abiding by them.

The goal of SGA is to provide a unified and responsible government that will promote the welfare and growth of students and for students. The SGA will work to ensure that all rights and privileges are shared by all. The SGA will make certain that the concerns of students will be heard and acted upon.

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