

# 2020 Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity Student Advisory Board Forum Questions

Please keep your responses to 200 words or less.

## **1. Camille Hattwig (she/her) for President**

**As the representative of the UW Seattle student body, how are you going to remain cognizant of different student issues?**

Given the potential for aspects of campus life to be remote next year, as well as the ever-intensifying effects of the pandemic, it is critical that I remain fully aware of all the issues every community of students are facing. One concrete way I will ensure awareness of student issues, particularly issues facing marginalized students, is to take advantage of the relationships I've cultivated with leaders in these communities and significant experience I have interfacing with leaders of marginalized student communities. My unique background in social justice advocacy through the JCC diversity commissions in ASUW, puts me in contact with countless campus leaders, and keeps me especially familiar with each entity involved in representing students communities. I am prepared to work with these entities and leaders again next year to understand the unique ways COVID is touching each community and how ASUW can help. To supplement this I intend to implement quarterly town halls and frequent campus wide emails, where I will discuss the various issues I am working on with clear opportunity for student feedback. I promise to reach and listen to all students, regardless of their involvement or positionality on campus.

**- How do you plan on simultaneously welcoming a new class of students while also acknowledging the collective trauma of COVID-19?**

This will be a very difficult balance to strike. Historically, welcoming new students to campus is a joyful and exciting time, both for student leaders as well as new students. But to approach fall quarter with this same attitude would frankly be inappropriate. Students are suffering, and that needs to be acknowledged. However, new students need to feel deeply celebrated and welcomed, understand that we are so excited to have them here, and know that celebrating them will be a part of collectively healing from the wounds of separation. Thus, my main approach will be to ensure new students find community as soon as they join UW. There is a special kind of solidarity all huskies are feeling right now within their student communities, so connecting new students to the support system of a welcoming community is my priority. Dawg Daze, HFS,

RSOs and more have set up meaningful programming in years past that can serve as a blueprint for taking similar events online. I never want any student on campus, particularly new students, to feel alone or isolated. I will implement targeted marketing strategies, specific programming, and clear resources to ensure all new students are connected to community and each other as soon as they are here at UW.

## **2. Dalton Owens (he/him) for Vice President**

### **Which communities do you think require budgeting and volunteers right now?**

In my opinion, the communities that require budgeting and volunteers right now are the communities that have been most heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This unique global crisis that society is currently facing has resulted in mass hospitalizations, displacement of people, and financial insecurity. I would first like to draw my attention towards low-income students. Students that already face financial hardship regardless of the pandemic that has become our new reality. Layoffs and non-essential business closures have put many people in the status of unemployment. I would hope that budgeting and volunteers along with the necessary efforts would allow for our University of Washington students who face financial hardship to experience as little added difficulty as possible. I also feel as if our international students deserve budgeting and volunteer efforts. Many of these students who are valued members of our campus community, have been relocated back to their home countries. I feel as if it is the responsibility of us as not only a student body, but a community, to stand behind these students as they are facing especially difficult times as a result of COVID-19.

### **How do you plan to make ASUW resources available to the student body?**

As ASUW Vice President I would seek collaboration with the Office of Communication and the Office of Outreach and Involvement in an effort to maximize the awareness of ASUW opportunities and resources. The Office of Communication and the Office of Outreach and Involvement share similar values of inclusion and awareness that I believe are applicable in a task such as increasing awareness of resources. I believe that efforts can be placed towards developing a centralized database for resources and opportunities offered by ASUW that can serve as a valuable resource for individual students as well as interested parties such as our wide variety of student organizations on campus.

### **- How will you help facilitate an effective ASUW board if classes are online fall quarter?**

With the possibility of online courses continuing into the Fall, I would have to develop creative and unique ways to perform my duties as ASUW Vice President. I feel as if the key to an effective board is communication and collaboration. Through communication and collaboration, board members who serve in varying capacities can unite under a common understanding that seeks goals reflective of ASUW's values and mission. As ASUW Vice President, it would be my duty to ensure that all board members are working towards their goals and have necessary support. This is an expectation that I would achieve through virtual platforms with routine check-ins. I would serve as the continuous link between our board members, ensuring that each member is kept informed on the tasks of their coworkers. I would also seek to develop board Zoom meetings for social and bonding purposes. It is necessary to develop a positive and cohesive community between all board members in order to serve our student body effectively. I would hope to assist in fostering this connection despite the added difficulty of online classes.

### **3. Rahul Prasad (he/him) for Director of Programming**

**If the COVID-19 crisis continues into fall quarter, what is your plan to adapt events such as fall fling and commencement? Additionally, how do you plan to make your events accessible to those without secure internet connection or transportation?**

My job as Director of Programming requires that I acknowledge the serious threat COVID-19 poses to our student body, and ensure their safety in these times above all else. Should the pandemic continue into fall quarter, it would be irresponsible and unsafe to host large-scale gatherings in person. Events like commencement can be held virtually through a webcast, similar to how June commencement is scheduled to proceed, with an invitation to the 2021 commencement also extended so that students do not completely miss out on the in-person experience. However, I believe events like Fall Fling are impossible to replicate online, so I would instead focus on postponing the event until Winter or Spring quarter, when it is safe to return to campus. These postponed events can even serve as celebrations for a return to campus. To bridge the remaining gap, I will work to create an alternative event, like UW pen pals or platonic zoom speed dates, where the focus is placed on providing new students with the opportunity to build meaningful connections remotely. While not a perfect substitute, these events will allow students to form bonds with each other that they can bring with them when they transition back to campus.

**- What are tangible ways you want to make ASUW programming accessible to the disabled community?**

Creating equal access to opportunities is one of my chief goals as Director of Programming, and there are specific steps I plan to take if elected. My first step would be to work with the proposed

Office of Inclusive Design to ensure all ASUW programming adheres to the principles of universal design. This could include steps such as distributing programming on multiple different platforms, ensuring features such as alt text are present on all online programming, and having ASL interpreters at all ASUW events. I also recognize that as someone who does not identify as part of the disabled community, I am not aware of all the challenges they face as students. That is why I would also make it a priority to reach out to the Student Disability Commission to better understand the ways I can help end ableist practices at UW. Increasing accessibility is a process, and one I look forward to dedicating myself to with the help of the OID and SDC.

#### **4. Rachel Smithers (she/her) for Director of Diversity Efforts**

**For the communities that you are not a part of and that you do not personally identify with, how will you make sure you serve their needs as a Director of Diversity Efforts?**

While serving and collaborating with diverse communities, my priority is divesting my own privilege to center the voices of students marginalized by oppressive, westernized power systems. I aim to adopt this approach within the communities I'm part of as well as those that I don't personally identify with. I am a Black, multi-racial, queer, disabled woman. However, students who hold any of those identities also have unique intersectional experiences.

As Director of Diversity Efforts, I plan to facilitate an inclusive environment where students feel comfortable sharing their voice and are authentically respected and validated in the work I do. This includes being transparent about my own experiences and ensuring confidentiality and compassion towards students' courageous stories. In determining what needs different communities have, I will default to the leaders, intellectuals, and members of communities to inform me about their most pressing needs. In order to limit the emotional labor of students, I will continue to do my due diligence to research the powerful community voices that have already been vulnerably shared. I will continuously accept criticism as a chance to grow and challenge my own biases to ensure equitable practices that include every voice and actively celebrate diversity.

**- What is your current involvement with the ECC and diverse communities? (Q Center, D Center, different commissions, etc etc.) What is your biggest weakness in that relationship? What do you hope to do more of if elected?**

Being a non-traditional first-generation student has made it challenging, and a bit daunting, to access many resources. I've been part of the OMA&D Mentor Power for Success mentorship program for three years connecting students to resources and creating meaningful relationships. As an intern for the Black Student Commission, I worked across diversity

commissions to program intersectional events with and for underrepresented students. I worked with the Student Advisory Board to share constituent concerns and connect important resources to my community. I've been a member of the Black Student Union for three years, which has taught me the importance of open dialogue in a self-affirming environment. I've also enjoyed working with the OMA&D advisers personally as an EOP student as well as professionally during Advising and Orientation.

I intend to continue improving and establishing my relationship with entities such as the Intellectual House, Q Center, D Center, Women's Center, etc. I want to spend more time being physically present in these spaces, having open dialogue, and respectfully observing to learn from the customs and practices of different communities. I want to increase collaboration among leaders of RSOs associated with the ECC and JCC through more intentional, accessible, and intersectional events.

#### **5. Mohammad Waleed Khan (he/him) for Director of Campus Partnerships**

**One of your job descriptions includes work with the Public Relations Committee to promote activities of the Association and advertise open positions and recruit volunteers. Please describe your strategy for reaching out to diverse communities such as the ECC and making sure their constituents are aware of advertised positions and volunteer opportunities within ASUW.**

Making sure all students' populations across campus are being heard and represented is one of my top priorities. In order to make sure students from diverse communities such as the ECC are aware of the advertised positions and volunteer opportunities within ASUW, I will increase the transparency between ECC and ASUW. I will collaborate with the Joint Commission Committee and legacy RSOs to give a platform to diverse communities across campus to share their experiences, concerns, and be involved with ASUW. I plan to communicate with organizations by emailing, tabling across campus, and continuing to have an open door policy to ensure that students are welcomed in ASUW spaces. In addition, through this role I plan to actively reach out to diverse communities at the ECC by making sure that any information about advertised positions and volunteer opportunities are promoted at the ECC through flyers and posters. Through my experiences of being an Orientation Leader and President of the Paksitani Student Association, I am aware of the spaces within the ECC. Using my experiences and partnering with the Director of Diversity of efforts, I will communicate with student organizations and ensure that they are aware of activities related to ASUW.

**How do you plan to include community involvement in the ECC, Q Center, Women's Center and D Center if you don't already have a relationship with those entities?**

In order to enrich community involvement with entities, I will collaborate with the proposed Office of Diversity and Inclusive Design to create events and resources accessible to students with disabilities, commuter students, non-traditional populations, international students, and transfer students. Being a Muslim Pakistani, first generation student, and student of color, I share the experiences across diverse populations, yet I want to increase the representation of all marginalized communities and advocate for student involvement within ASUW. In order to make sure I am including community involvement with the ECC, Q Center, Women's Center, and D Center I will actively reach out to these entities via email and visit these spaces to learn more about their services and resources. I will further reach out to leaders within these entities to ensure there is a healthy and strong relationship between ASUW and entities. Students from underrepresented backgrounds feel as if they can't be involved with opportunities within ASUW. I will work with the ASUW Board of Directors, entities, RSOs, and student population to heighten community involvement, increase confidence and strengthen the transparency between ASUW and diverse communities to ensure that every voice is heard.

## **6. Clara Coyote (she/her) for Director of University Affairs**

**As ASUW's main liaison to the University's administration, how do you plan to ensure that the administration continues to make diversity and its expansion a priority?**

While students holding traditionally privileged identities may think most things at UW are just fine, for the most marginalized, our system is riddled with prejudices. At every level, my current platform which includes protecting WA-resident DACA students from paying out-of-state tuition, expanding use of lecture capture technology to expand course accessibility for disabled students, and creating a Transfer Student Task Force, is centered around diversity and equity at the administrative and faculty level. To go into detail about a policy goal closely tied to expanding diversity, I will lobby administration to transform the admissions process for capacity constrained majors and freshmen direct to college programs to ensure holistic admissions processes are reviewed by third party admissions experts. While many departments claim to have holistic admissions, currently, departments set that definition for themselves and are not trained or overseen in how to admit holistically. This means biases allow privileged kids from privileged high schools with an easier time at "better" resumes may be admitted to direct to college programs or competitive majors over those who worked hard and faced adversity at every step. I will fight to ensure training in holistic admission for every department that reads applications.

**Due to COVID-19, there was a great deal of confusion and anxiety from the student body due to a lack of understanding of what the administration was doing. How will you ensure future better communication between the University's administration and the student body?**

Sometimes the UA is the only student allowed in closed meetings of faculty and administration. This special privilege holds immense responsibility to bring that information out of that room and directly to students. In my current role as the Speaker of Student, I have done my part to spark communication about COVID-19 response from administration. Alongside my awesome senate office team, I hosted a live filmed forum at the end of winter quarter with President Cauce about what the future in the COVID-era would hold. Senators got to ask President Cauce directly about accountability from administration. I know how to coordinate with administration and push for direct conversations with students. To continue this commitment, I will create a new means of speaking with students directly about the work of administration: ask the ASUW President to include updates from the Director of University affairs in their update emails that go out to the entire student body. Many students don't realize the work of Direct of University Affairs and I want to change that. Lastly, I will push for frequent virtual town hall meetings given by admin and faculty together just like the first of its kind held on 5/1/20.

## **7. Alexandra Schroeder (she/her) for Director of Community Relations**

**How do you plan on fostering a sense of community on campus if classes are online fall quarter?**

In the event that we remain online in the fall, a huge priority of mine would be trying to recreate the space where students, especially those who are brand new to our University, can build relationships within their communities. Fall quarter is such a critical time for the development of our community, and trying to virtually provide the student body with events such as Dawg Days and other welcome events throughout the quarter is essential to maintaining these connections. I will work closely with the leadership of First Year Programming, who work largely serves my constituents such as Greek Life, Commuter and Transfer students, RCSA, and more, to create programming that will create a foundation for our new students and assist our returning students to remain engaged. This programming will make it so that when we are able to return to campus, we feel just as connected to our peers. Additionally, I would work to create joint programming amongst entities to foster new relationships across communities, to expand our individual circles. I will work closely with the ASUW Office of Communications to ensure that these opportunities are broadcasted to all students, in order to increase participation as much as possible.

**-With the decision on the future of DACA coming out very soon, how do you plan on supporting undocumented students on campus next year? What will you do if you encounter other student communities that are biased against undocumented students?**

In this role, I will support legislation that will work towards the creation of an opt-out Student Health Insurance program that would cover all UW students who do not have existing insurance. This program would ensure that our undocumented students would be able to receive medical coverage and federal assistance. Additionally, I would work directly with Housing and Food services to ensure that all practices are non-discriminatory and are accessible for all documented students. Support from HFS is especially critical given the current COVID-19 crisis, that disproportionately affects marginalized students, including undocumented students. I will work with the Board of Directors to fight xenophobia against DACA recipients both on and off campus. I also will partner with the Director of Diversity Efforts and JCC to host events on campus to publicly show our support for our undocumented student population, such as the DREAM banquet hosted by the Latinx Student Commission which raises money for their SEED scholarship for undocumented students.