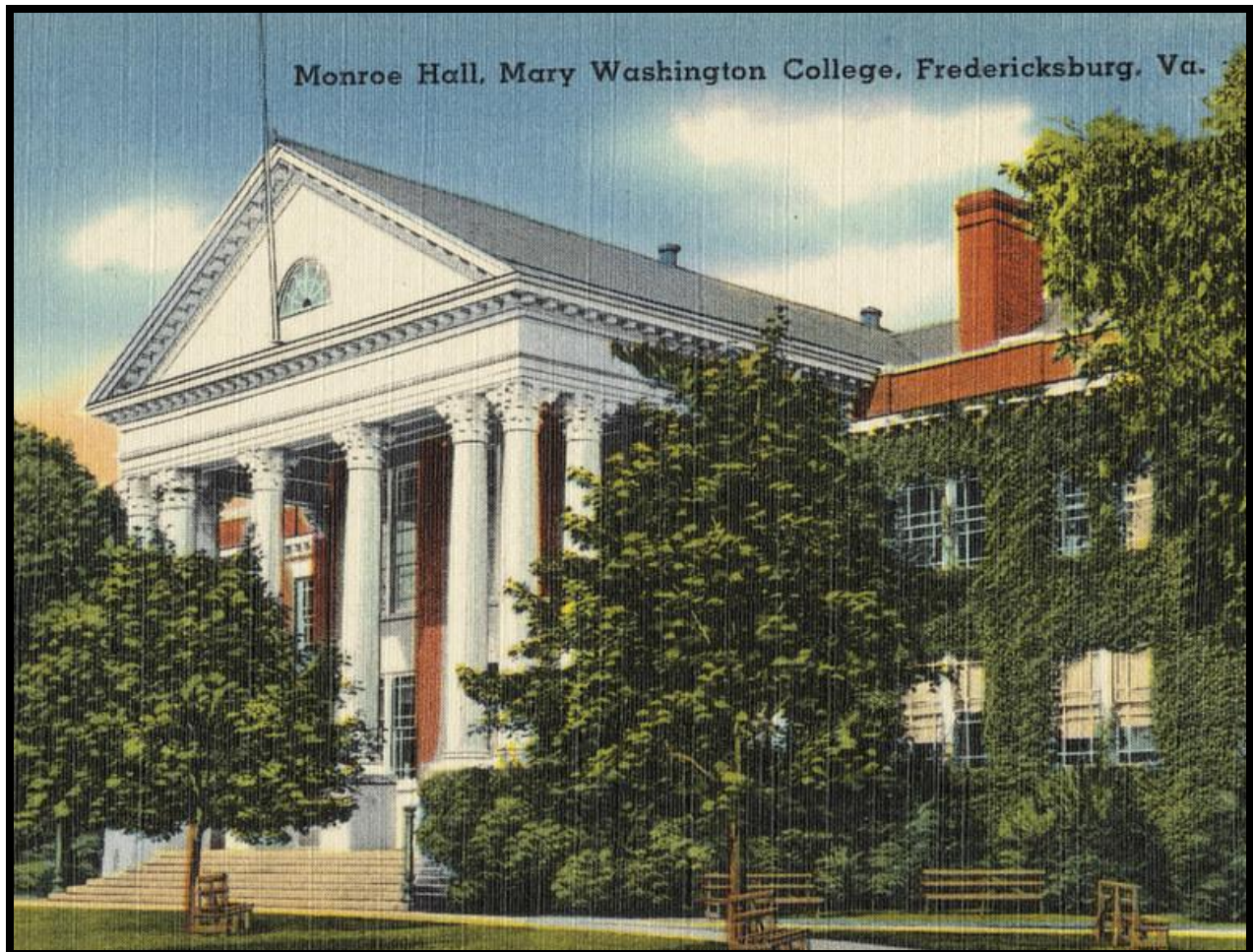


AY 2022-2023

Board of Visitors SGA Report

Beginning of the Semester, Fall 2022



An old postcard photo of Monroe Hall, surrounded by lush green trees and a lightly cloudy sky.



Presented by Joey Zeldin, SGA President, 2022-2023

*Presented on Friday, September 16th 2022 at the Board of Visitors' first meeting
of the 2022-2023 Academic Year.*

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Intro - What Students Want

The past 2 years have been unprecedented, with many of our lives being flipped upside down and bringing outcomes we never thought would happen. Students have been subjected to this flip, some more extreme than others. And out of all the dialogue, responses, and interactions we've had with students, one word has come to the forefront: investment. Students want more investments on campus, from extended service hours at the library and gym to weekly events to build more social interactions and have stronger community values to more accessibility features within their residence halls. We've continued to talk to students regarding what they want to see on campus. And the theme of investments continues to be a large factor.

I hope that this report can reflect not only the wishes of students and their longing for a better UMW, but also provide convincing data to better support the need for critical investments in departments, buildings, and the environment of campus overall. According to the 2022 U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges in Virginia report, UMW was ranked #7 in the Top Public Schools in the South and #19 in Best Regional Universities in the South. We should ensure that these rankings stay high by continuing to invest in areas that students wish to see improve and create more student participation, as well as ensure that investments will improve the student experience for years to come.

As President of the SGA, I offer as much as I can to you, the Board of Visitors, to ensure that these investments to our student experience come to fruition. I hope that with this report, you ensure that student voices, wishes, and needs are continuing to be the number one determining factor in your decisions. I look forward to many more interactions with you all and am excited for our partnership to benefit all the students, former, current, and future, of our wonderful university.

My best,



Joey Zeldin

Overview of SGA

To provide transparency about our organization, I've provided a brief overview of our organization and what areas we have filled. As of today, we currently have 17 members including myself in our organization. 10 members are SGA Senators/Committee Chairs, 5 are appointed members, and then there is our Vice President, Jaylyn Long, and the SGA President, myself.

Class Senators

- Joe Johnson, Class of 2023
- Uche Okoronkwo, Class of 2023
- Martina Pugh, Class of 2025
- Tonia Attie, Class of 2026
- Katherine Armstrong, Class of 2026
- Ashley Lam, Class of 2026

Committee Chairs

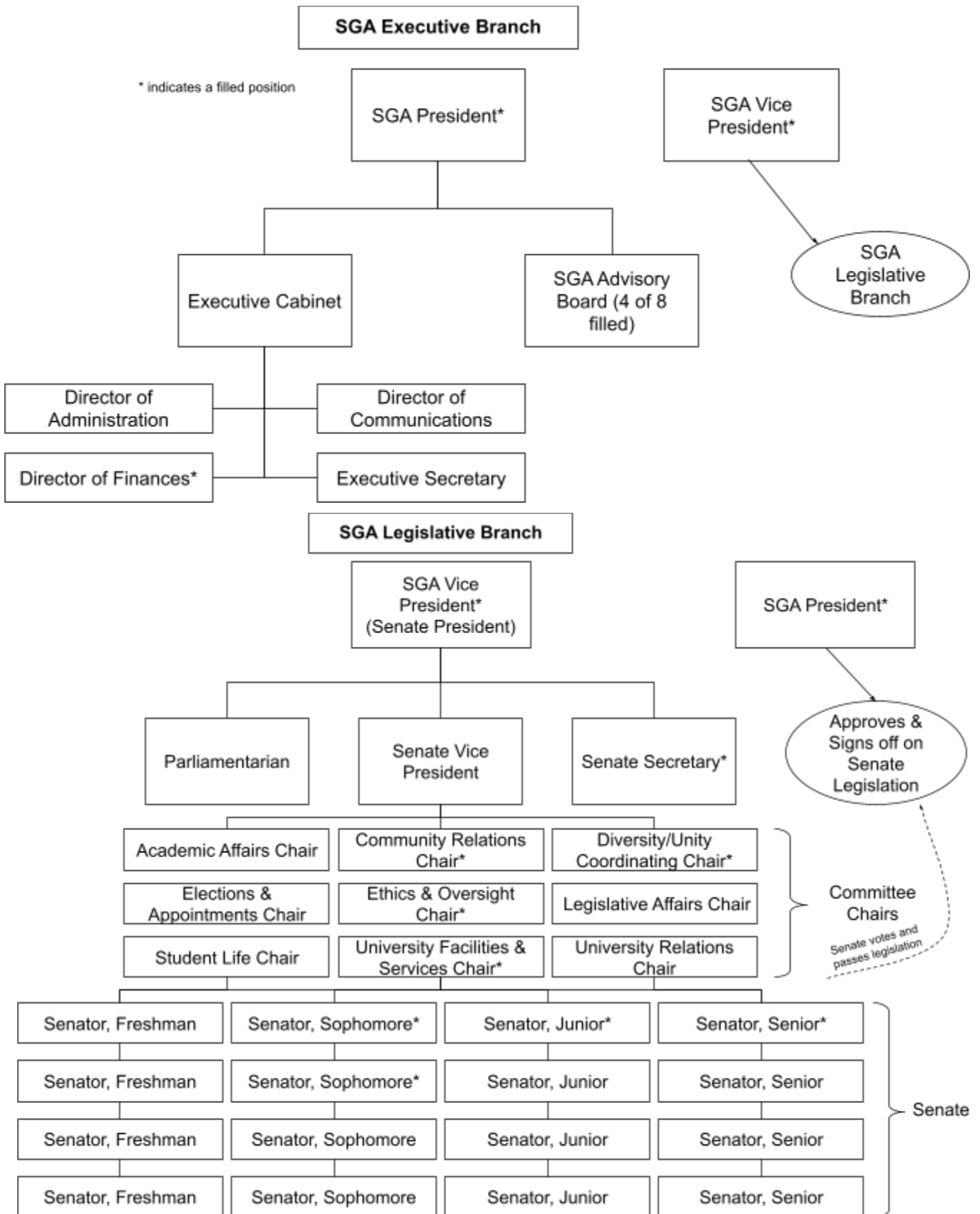
- Carlos Nunes, Diversity and Unity Coordinating Committee Chair
- Nahjah Wilson, Ethics and Oversight Committee Chair
- Shadwick Yoder, Community Relations Committee Chair
- Chandler Carlson, Facilities and Services Committee Chair

Appointed Members

- Callie Harkins, Senate Secretary
- Kaylah Lightfood, Senate Vice President
- Reagan Noyes, Director of Finances
- Marissa Kessler, Director of Communications
- Ally Munday, Director of Administration

Currently, our organization splits into two areas, the Legislative Branch and Executive Branch, with the SGA President leading the Executive Branch and the SGA Vice President leading the Legislative Branch as the Senate President. Our Legislative Branch deals with creating legislation, gathering student input to create that legislation, and debating issues to use within legislation and resolutions. The Executive Branch deals with the operations and execution of SGA and its actions as well as acting as a liaison between students and UMW Administration.

Organization Structure:



Student Issues

Our biggest job at SGA is to be the voice of the student population. We hear a variety of issues when we speak to students, host events, and allow students to present their dialogue. I've decided to split this section into two parts; an issues at-large section, which will describe our three biggest general issue areas, followed by a specific issues section which will detail multiple issues and problems that students have presented to us and that will become a building block for issues, legislation, and projects that we will tackle, as well as allow you, the BOV, to be able to further get a pulse of what students are feeling.

Issues at-large

Infrastructure

There are a lot of UMW students who only know a campus filled with construction equipment, torn up and dirtied walkways, loud noises, and detours. It's fantastic that we are creating projects that will improve campus. However, with the pandemic and the issues that Universities are facing in light of this, students should not be subject to these conditions when coming to a University that was rated highly in the Princeton and Forbes reviews for our beautiful campus. Students have inquired about an overhaul and renovation of parking facilities to better accommodate the student trek from parking spot to destination. We've luckily seen the repaving of Double Drive and the Westmoreland parking lot; however, the Sunken Road Parking lot remains in poor condition and is the only large lot (along with the Alvey Parking Deck) that can hold residential students. When we look at a map of campus, this only accommodates students living in Arrington, as well as First Year Students in Willard & Virginia. Students who live in Mason, Bushnell, or Jefferson will not have almost-guaranteed (meaning that more than 90% of the time, they're able to find a parking spot near their dorm) parking in close proximity to their buildings.

Our off-campus students have also expressed the need for expanded parking. Currently, off-campus students can only park in the Alvey/Sunken lot or Apartments parking lot, which is also used by residents of the Apartments. Off-campus students have expressed their desire to be able to park on more lots and spaces across campus for a variety of valid reasons, from being able to go straight from classes to work to not having to walk across campus to get from their car to their classroom, especially for commuter

students who take classes at night. As a university that serves a large population of off-campus/commuter students, I believe that it is imperative that we heed these wishes to create a more accessible environment for all of our community.

Another area of concern with infrastructure is the amount of construction across campus. As mentioned before, while construction is necessary to improving campus, it is also an incredible strain on how students interact with the university as well as the image of our university. Many students have expressed concerns about the longevity of construction happening across campus, how loud some construction can get (especially construction happening near or next to a residence hall), and the lack of information on certain projects occurring. Students have requested more information on projects, more timelines, and notifications of projects that will happen in the future. Construction can also impair accessibility needs for students. While the wooden bridge next to Woodard Hall was a necessary replacement, the grading of the bridge was difficult for students who had mobility issues and students who were blind to walk on. In addition, many sidewalks that students normally walk on become caked with mud, bricks become removed, or fences fall down onto sidewalks, causing a multitude of hazards to all students.

We hope to gather more data this semester, take action, and report back to UMW administration, the BOV, and other necessary groups to strengthen and support our endeavors on bettering our campus infrastructure. We've seen investments in replacing the piping, remodeling residence halls, and repaving. We need to ensure more investments will be made in projects to improve academic buildings and structures around campus, as well as ensure that future projects are impacting students' everyday lives as little as possible and are held to high standards to reach better completion times and more mindfulness towards the campus community.

Safety

We have been fortunate to have made progress in certain areas to promote the safety and welfare of students and community members alike. We were even able to allow pepper spray to be legally carried on UMW's campuses, a huge win for safety and providing a comfortable atmosphere for students. However, allowing pepper spray will not eliminate all threats to a student's safety and we must acknowledge that there is more progress that

needs to be made. We hope that whenever the SGA, now and in the future, presents legislation or policy regarding safety, there are multiple parties able to read, listen, and act upon this legislation to ensure community-based solutions and progress.

We've seen a need for increased security presence across campus. Students have requested a variety of safety measures, such as more card-key locks on buildings, increased security cameras, and better lighting in certain areas of campus. The RAVE Guardian app continues to be something that we promote to students for safety measures so that they are able to connect with University safety systems in an instant. We will be using all our resources to keep raising safety standards. We will be meeting with various departments across campus to talk about their protocols, what students have showed us as being the most important safety measures, and how we can work together to implement more systems across campus.

One of the most important junctures that we have an opportunity to work on at UMW is our partnership with the Offices of Title IX, Diversity & Inclusion, and the Center for Prevention and Education. Working with them will allow us to help expand awareness and resources for students to utilize while on campus, as well as increase student knowledge on sexual assaults, programs they can utilize while they are a student, and create more transparency on how the offices help survivors deal with their trauma. We look forward to engaging our entire SGA with Dr. Shavonne Shorter, the University's Chief Diversity Officer, and Dr. Ruth Davison, the University's Director of Compliance, as two of our key partners in working on legislation to create a more inclusive and more accessible campus. By working with these two partners, we can explore creative ways with them to create better programs and initiatives that engage students more while also protecting their well-being.

Services

At UMW, we are fortunate to have a variety of student services that cover ground on a variety of different areas, from events to mental health. Unfortunately, in the past few years, we've seen a decline of engagement in these areas. Students have complained about the lack of hours at various student centers, like the Gym, Library, and Dining Areas. Of course, feasibility plays a large part in these things - to keep a dining area or gym like ours open 24/7 like other larger universities is next to impossible. However, the theme of

investments comes back into play; putting more money towards services like the gym and dining areas to have them open for long periods of time would only benefit students as well as the image of our university. The HCC remains open 24/7 with access later at night requiring an EagleOne to enter. Since the library connects to the HCC, students have expressed interest in the location becoming a 24/7 study hub. Currently, the HCC is the only building on campus that remains open for students who need to have late night study sessions. While the library's extended hours of 8AM to 10PM work well from Monday to Thursday, oftentimes students wish to utilize this space during the weekend when it is only open from 8AM to 5PM on Friday, 12PM to 6PM on Saturday, and 1PM to 10PM on Sundays. Having the space as a 24/7 study area that's interconnected to the HCC would be a huge benefit for students.

UMW students LOVE the gym. Oftentimes students who have dreaded 8AM classes will go there to get a pre-class workout in to wake themselves up. Students who have a busy morning schedule may wish to have the gym in the later afternoon or evening. Students have expressed interest in an expansion in gym hours, preferably in the morning, so they are able to exercise at their convenience. As with many other things, the gym, as well as Campus Recreation as a whole, has experienced severe budget cuts. This means limited fitness classes, limited gym attendants and staff, limited equipment, and the limitation of certain areas and equipment that is able to be used by all students, such as the pool or auxiliary gyms.

Hours from Spring 2022 were the following:

- Monday through Thursday: 8AM to 9PM
- Friday: 8AM to 8PM
- Saturday/Sunday: 2PM to 8PM

In January 2020, pre-pandemic hours were the following:

- Monday through Thursday: 6AM to 10:30PM
- Friday: 6AM to 8PM
- Saturday/Sunday: 11AM to 8PM

Students want the return of pre-pandemic hours and gym services because they know it will be widely used by all members of campus. Students who have morning classes cannot get a morning workout at our gym due to the 8 AM opening times on Monday through Friday, as well as the incredibly restricted hours on Saturdays and Sundays, giving students only 6 hours to work out. Currently, Campus Recreation is estimating that they've been able

to piece-meal enough funding to keep the gym open from 8 AM to 10:30 PM from Monday to Thursday, 8AM to 8PM on Fridays, and 11AM to 8PM. I want to ensure that not only does Campus Recreation not have to scrape together funding to keep gym hours to almost-pre-pandemic hours, but that we are ensuring that these types of services are well-funded. According to Medical News Today, those who exercise have 1.5 fewer poor mental health days, with those who have diagnosed depression and exercise reporting that they had 3.75 fewer mental health days compared to those who exercised. And according to the University of Michigan Health Services, 1 in 3 college students will experience severe depression. By allowing more funding towards the gym, we can help combat college depression by allowing UMW students more access to the gym to help relieve their stressors.

Finally, students want engagement. We see this directly with Spring 2022 - students came out to events like Big Spring Concert, Devil Goat Day, and the Multicultural Fair. But with the pandemic and the disconnect for over 2 years, events and the way we hold them will forever change. Right now it is critically important to ensure that while we work with groups across campus, all organizations that plan these important student events have the support of the administration, as well as the Board of Visitors. Traditions may look different because the experiences we've all had have been different in the past 2 years. We hope to use a variety of things, such as our own homecoming funds, to support organizations like Class Council and Campus Programming Board in their mission to provide top tier events for students to keep them engaged during their time at the University.

Specific Student Issues

Students come to us with a variety of issues. Things they've come to us that don't fall under these at-large categories include, but are not limited to:

- Expansion of Dining Hours
- Changing Excused/Unexcused Absence policies in the classroom
- Better accessibility for classrooms (Hybrid functionality)
- More dining options (addition of a new restaurant
 - My personal input is to put something on the south end of campus - the closest dining for Apartments, Randolph/Mason, Jefferson, & Bushnell is the UC and dining options only extend on the north end of campus.
- Pushing Spring Break back by a week or two - many students have viewed this to be an extremely early Spring Break compared to other Colleges/Universities.
- Investing more funds to expand student employment positions across campus.

Our Initiatives for the Future

Of course, we've set the bar high for getting student work done. After all, it wouldn't be a UMW experience if we didn't challenge ourselves to get excellent work done. For this, we have a few initiatives, projects, and other things planned to garner student participation within the campus community, allow students to have their voices heard, and allow SGA to function as both a representative body and a conglomerate of student resources that can be easily accessed by students. This list is our top four, but does not include other smaller things that we have planned.

A.S.P.I.R.E. Week

Spearheaded by our Vice President, Jaylyn Long, A.S.P.I.R.E. week will seek to re-promote the ASPIRE values that we all have come to know and love and reinforce them to ensure that they are enshrined in our University community for years to come. The weeklong event will help re-introduce the ASPIRE values that students may have forgotten about, using each day of the week with a corresponding letter, with A for Accountability starting Monday and ending the week on Saturday with E for Engagement. ASPIRE week will support both academic and individual integrity among students, while also putting our most important values at the forefront of the event.

May We Introduce Ourselves' Series

This series will spring off of our SGA Town Hall we had last year and focus on subsets of topics. We used input from last year's town hall, and the consensus (unsurprisingly) was that students have a LOT to say, both good and bad. Thus, it was important to all of SGA to ensure that we divide and conquer certain topics that students feel are important to them. This plan includes a town hall on Title IX, a town hall with the SGA, a town hall with the President and his cabinet, and even possibly seeing about getting local, state, and possibly federal representatives to come down to speak on real world issues with students.

'SGA Votes' Collaboration Event

As the 2022 midterm elections approach, SGA is looking to equip students with the necessary info they need to register to vote, get the resources they need to vote, and actually cast their vote for their candidates. As such, we will seek to partner with UMW Votes, UMW Young Democrats, and UMW College Republicans to help bolster voter education on campus, keep students informed on their candidates, and help out-of-state students with getting the necessary resources to vote in their home states from Virginia.

Student Roundtable Series

A new concept to the SGA will be the introduction of our roundtables series. This will allow the SGA President to meet with different groups of students, such as club leaders of marginalized groups on campus, students involved in environment and ecological sciences to implore greenery and health on campus, and students in our BLS programs. From there, we can use student input to help shape our legislation and actions taken for groups of students that both want it and need it.

So What's Next?

Our organization is poised to grow with new Senators from the classes of 2025 and 2026. I believe this is the perfect time to equip our current and new Senators with the information they need to create legislation that helps them cater to our student body. Thus, my role as President is a largely supportive one, in planning these initiatives, meeting with student leaders and campus officials, and assisting our legislative branch in getting all the information they need. I hope to be able to count on you, the Board of Visitors, to support the endeavors and actions of the SGA from afar and up close, advocating for us and being able to listen when we ask something of you. We have successfully gotten our name as an organization out into the student body with our previous president, Brianna Reaves, and her initiative of reviving the vibe. Now, it's my turn to take that revival and push full steam ahead to ensure momentum is being made for the present, as well as the future SGAs that will benefit from our work we do now. In order to do this, support is needed when asked, and as I stated before, I hope that your support can be a partnership in which we all get to move on a path forward to benefit the student body and help the university we all have come to love grow into its greatest potential.

