

The Student Government Association at Georgia State University

91st Administration Mid-Year Report





Executive Address

My goal as Student Body President is to put students first.

Which is exactly what student government is all about; however, we have not been putting students first. This year marks my third year in Student Government and, each year, I have watched as we have become more comfortable with the status quo. As the esteemed civil rights leader Benjamin Mays once said, “The tragedy of life is often not in our failure, but rather in our complacency.” Members of Student Government, we have become complacent! We have failed to challenge the very ideas of student self-governance. We have failed to find innovative solutions to our most pressing issues. And, perhaps, most tragically we have fallen out of touch with the Student Body.

There are students on every campus whose voices have been forgotten and overlooked. During this administration, we will put an end to that and finally give students a platform to speak about their concerns. There are students who are still struggling to find a place to sleep at night, denied the fundamental right to access menstrual products, who want to get involved on campus but do not have the time nor the resources, who are concerned about sustainability, and those who are worried that parking and transportation are becoming a second thought rather than a first priority. In the midst of a pandemic, those issues are not getting any easier to solve.

“The tragedy of life is often not in our failure, but rather in our complacency.” – Benjamin Mays

But keep your heads up because now is no time for despair. When staring down the path of a thousand-mile-journey one has two options: Turn away and reject the daunting task which lies before you, or you can take one step. Just one, single step. That is all a journey is. One step after the other. Senators, members of the 91st administration, I ask you today to take that step with me.

Let us fulfill our duties and responsibilities as representatives chosen by the Student Body. Let us all be knowledgeable about our bylaws and our constitution, learn Robert’s Rules, and be actively involved members of this organization. As Student Government representatives, we are students first and there will be times when we should focus on our academics. However, I have two requests. That is to be ready to devote your time to this organization and to give your undivided attention to the Student Body.

So, let us remember our purpose and let us aim to the future,
but let us never forget our past.

We are the Student Government Association of Georgia State University
and we will put students first
because the welfare of the Student Body requires it.

#StudentsFirst

Kaelen Thomas
University-Wide Student Body President
91st Administration





Campaign Promises

While campaigning for SGA President, I ran on the slogan of #StudentsFirst. The slogan embodied the idea that as Student Government representatives, the Student Body should always be at the forefront of our actions. However, #StudentsFirst was also an acronym for the promises I made to the Student Body while visiting all six of Georgia State's campuses.

Feminine Hygiene Products – During the 90th administration, an idea known as, “the Flower Initiative” was created to gauge the demand for a University-ran service that provided free menstrual products to students on every campus. The initiative was scheduled to launch in the Spring of 2020; however, the Covid-19 pandemic halted its release. It was my goal as SGA President to continue the initiative and see it through to completion. The expected launch date now is Spring 2021.

Increasing On-campus Jobs – While campaigning, I heard students talk about the lack of opportunities to find on-campus employment. It was my goal as SGA President to work with the Department for Student Success to ease restrictions on student organizations so that they could provide stipends to their members. In doing so, we can increase student engagement on-campus and provide these opportunities for students.

Reducing Student Homelessness – I've walked down the streets on the Atlanta campus and have spoken to several students who have no place to rest at night. Students who rely on the services we provide in our libraries and recreation centers to survive. We need to do better. As SGA President, my goal was to work with the EMBARK program run by the Office of the Dean of Students to increase awareness about student homelessness and connect students with the resources that they provide. Additionally, I wanted to examine the possibility of Student Government paying University Housing for rooms that could be used specifically for students experiencing housing insecurity.

Sustainability – As the world's climate continues to change rapidly due to the sheer pace of human development, Georgia State University finds itself at a crossroads. The Atlanta campus, situated in the heart of Downtown Atlanta, is in an area known for some of the highest energy bills in the State of Georgia. As a University, we should be focused on moving toward more sustainable and green-friendly practices. As SGA President, I pledged to work with the Residence Hall Association to sponsor dorm room energy and water saving competitions to increase student involvement in sustainability. Additionally, work with other on-campus and off-campus partners to switch our University's default



search engine to 'Ecosia', determine the affordability of solar panel installations, reduce food waste, and increase recycling in our dormitories.

Transportation – Georgia State has one of the largest commuter populations in Georgia. They makeup the vast majority of students who are enrolled at our University. Unfortunately, we have not been treating our commuter population with the respect that they deserve. As SGA President, it is my goal to prioritize maintaining free parking for commuter students and reliable shuttle transportation with the University's Administration.

Legislation Passed

Bills

- 91-UWB-01 to Create an Executive Cabinet - referred to Bylaws Committee on 5-07-20

Special Orders

- 91-USO-CL-ATL-01 to Seat Members of the ATL Senate
- 91-USO-CL-02 to seat Bylaw Review Committee
- 91-USO-CL-03 to seat Safety Committee
- 91-USO-FC-01 to create an Ad Hoc Committee to Establish a 5-year Strategic Plan
- 91-USO-FC-02 to Establish Ad-Hoc Student Justice Committee
- 91-UXO-01 to Seat the Newton EVP
- 91-UXO-02 to Seat an Alpharetta EVP, Speaker, and Senator
- 91-UXO-03 to Seat a Newton Speaker

Executive Orders

- 91-UXO-01 to Seat the Newton EVP
 - 91-UXO-02 to Seat an Alpharetta EVP, Speaker, and Senator
 - 91-UXO-03 to seat a Newton Speaker
 - 91-UXO-04 to Retain the Role of EVP - referred to Bylaws Committee on 10-29-20
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University-Wide Initiatives

1. Our Menstrual Product Initiative, i.e., the Flower Initiative, is a pilot program focused on determining whether there is a substantial need for menstrual products to be provided to Georgia State students on all campuses. We plan on distributing pre-packaged brown paper bags of tampons and pads out of the Student Health Clinics on Atlanta, Clarkston, and Dunwoody. However, since there is no clinic location on the Alpharetta, Decatur, and Newton campus, we will be providing these products through the Dean of Students Office on those campuses for the duration of our pilot program.

When requesting menstrual products from one of our pickup locations on campus, students can request one brown paper bag filled with either **(1)** 6 tampons, **(2)** 6 pads, or **(3)** 3 tampons and 3 pads (if available). Staff members in charge of administering this service should ask students which of the three options they are requesting. Before receiving one of the three options available, students must scan and complete the Flower Initiative Survey using the link or QR code provided on our flyers. After completing the survey, students should show the staff member that they have completed the survey. The staff member will then find the bag marked with for the products the student requested and hand the bag to the student. Students can come as many times as they want but must complete the Flower Initiative Survey every time before receiving the products requested.

This pilot program will end either on February 11 or when supplies run out, whichever comes first. After the conclusion of the pilot program, all the data collected will be used to determine whether continuing a program like this one is viable. Our expected launch date is January 11, 2021.

2. Over the Summer, I met with the Senior Vice President for Student Success Dr. Allison Calhoun-Brown to talk about the feasibility of creating a website like the University of Georgia's (UGA) student.uga.edu. This website would be a "one stop shop" for information that students need to know. Students would be able to find shortcuts to counseling resources, parking and transportation, meal plans, and all the other student services that we offer.
3. During my campaign, I noted that several students on the Perimeter campuses (PC) felt as though the PC Advisement Center was severely lacking. I took the stories and concerns I had heard to Carol Cohen and her team at the University Advisement Center. During this meeting, we talked about different ways that we can support the academic development of students. I plan on meeting with her team again in the Spring semester so we can begin implementing the focus groups that were suggested.



4. In May, the Atlanta Speaker Pro Tempore, John Le, and I met with University officials representing the GSU EMBARK program. This program focuses on individuals that need financial, academic, or additional assistance within the GSU community. We reached out to them as a part of my campaign promise to tackle the issue of student homelessness. In doing so, we found out that the EMBARK program has been able to provide financial assistance to thousands of students using Georgia State's Emergency Assistance Fund. Additionally, they were onboard with the idea of paying for rooms to be set aside within University Housing for students experiencing housing insecurity, but there were concerns about where the funding for this idea would come from.
5. This Summer, we saw the rise of #BlackLivesMatter movements across the globe. In response to the increasing demands for racial justice, Student Government created our Student Justice Ad-Hoc committee to work with on-campus groups like the African Diaspora Student Advocacy Coalition (ADSAC) in furthering students' demands for racial justice. During a meeting with the Administrative Council in July, I gave a speech to more than 60 University Officials reinforcing the importance of striving for racial equality in all aspects of higher education.

Spring Goals

1. Complete the Flower Initiative and work with our on-campus partners to support this program's development.
2. Examine our governing documents and lead the restructuring of SGA.
3. Prepare for SGA Elections.
4. Deliver on my remaining campaign promises.

Alpharetta

Executive Vice-President – Muskan Virani



I am Muskan Virani, an international student pursuing Associates in Biology while contributing this pathway towards Bachelor's in Nursing. I am currently serving as the executive Vice President at Alpharetta Campus and am humbled to say that I am honored to be a part of SGA. Initially, my goal was to be involved and know where I stand. I truly realized my potential and goal after a month in this position when I was able to talk to students, student leaders, advisors, and committee members. Alpharetta campus lacks many

amenities and facilities that other campus' students fairly enjoy. Our goal is to get equal opportunities, facilities, and proper qualitative representation among all the students at Georgia State University. Our goal this semester, especially during this pandemic was to help students get involved, get to know SGA as a whole, the available opportunities to increase their potential, and ways to be a part of a safe community, all being safe and taking proper precautions. This initiated to change major goals within SGA members at Alpharetta as well such as: Office hour contributions, working methods, individual roles, program hour contributions, recruitment, and proper indulgence in working habits. We will continue to strive and work towards our general and specific goals in the spring 2021 semester.

Campus Initiatives

1. Student Discounts from Local Business Owners: Our first and fore most initiative was to have some replacement for lack of cafeteria setting. We were able to discuss many forthcoming ideas and solutions pertaining to the issues concerning monetary aspect, building security, vendor security, etc., We were finally able to get support for having local business owners around 5 - 7 miles radius provide student discounts in exchange for advertisements. The students will be required to show their ID cards. This initiative is in the process with first step



of generating a proper student survey (in completion). The best part is that, now this is more than for just a cafeteria. The business search will go far to take in account student's ease and savings for their necessities & requirements as well.

2. Getting an Individual chapter for Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society at Alpharetta Campus: PTK is an international honor society of two-year colleges that is officially recognized by AACCC. This is one of the world's largest honors societies for college students, and it devotes many leadership, fellowship, and scholarship opportunities. PTK is present in all campuses except the Alpharetta campus; thus, in bringing PTK to the Alpharetta campus we will provide students with many opportunities. Unfortunately, we were unable to find an advisor to sponsor the creation of PTK. We will continue to strive and approach advisors for sponsorship in the spring 2021 semester.
3. Creating a Pre-Med Club at Alpharetta: The establishment of this club will help students interested in the Healthcare field to navigate their pre-requisites, clinical experience, research opportunities, and much more. This club will create an environment where students can connect and help each. Having the opportunity to create the "Pre-Med" club will be extremely advantageous to students when they transition to the Atlanta campus, as there is a "Pre-Med" club there as well. Unfortunately, we were unable to receive advisership for the Pre-Medicine Club. Again, we will continue to strive and approach advisors for sponsorship in the spring 2021 semester.

Events:

1. Alpharetta's Good Morning GSU Breakfast: This successful event was to enjoy a welcoming chick-file breakfast with students and let them know that we are here for them. During the ALP Good Morning GSU event, we managed to endorse the existence of SGA and peek student's interest in being a part of SGA and recruit Committee members. This event helped us get a better understanding of student's needs and the flow of this semester. We also highlighted the upcoming events throughout the semester and the vacant positions that students would be interested in. This was the first representation of our goal of encouraging involvement.
2. Mask Up and Grab Lunch event: In this event, the students were able to chat and have lunch with the student life, Dean of student office, Panther activities council and Student Government association representatives to discuss opportunities like volunteering, campus employment, and getting involved generally. This event also turned out to be successful. In this event we gave out lunch boxes along with face masks to the student body with many giveaways. We also tried recruiting members along with endorsing SGA's future events and meetings.
3. Hey Day Event: This event was to gather and get to know each other. We wanted students to have an on - campus experience while taking precautionary measures. During the event, we made name tags, distributed king of pop popsicles and gave many giveaways. This went hand in hand with our Remind me texting initiative and endorsement. Also, we continued our efforts in recruitment and providing involvement opportunities. We were able to endorse future events as well while estimating the flow of students for upcoming events.
4. Breast Cancer Awareness event: This was to raise awareness about the impact of breast cancer on patients and to show our support for it. We wanted to openly talk about breast cancer, ways

to get checked for it, and educate students regarding important facts & myths. We entertained many questions and provided answers to the best of our knowledge. We had multiple participation gifts and giveaways along with yummy cupcakes, cookies, and pink drink! Celebrating the PINK PARTY!

5. Drive - In Movie with PAC & Virtual Chat & Chew: We helped PAC showcase a Drive - IN movie: Jumanji II, in organization & advertisement along with hosting the #LibMovieChat&Chew where we provided prizes to students who were able to answer questions about the movie.
6. The Great American Smoke Out Turkey: This event served as a way to send out the message of “Quit smoking” while showing our support and celebrating thanksgiving with a boxed turkey sandwich and many interesting giveaways.

Along with the above events and initiatives, members of SGA were able to contribute their time and efforts volunteering for the following:

1. Campus Safety Walk
2. Library Board Games by Library, PAC, & Student Life
3. Donuts with the Dean by PAC and Student Life
4. Drive - In Movie Organization by PAC, Student Life, and SGA.
5. Virtual Chat & chew on Black Panther Movie Discussion by Library & Student Life.



Legislation

There was no legislation passed.

Spring Goals

Our goals for the spring semester include recruiting members to fill in the vacant positions at SGA – Alpharetta campus. And host the following opportunistic and fun events on campus and virtually throughout the semester. Our goal of getting equal opportunities, facilities, and proper qualitative representation among all the students at Georgia State University continues to stand firm.



The Events planned so far:

For January - A Welcome Back event.

For February - Valentine's Day event and Teacher Appreciation event.

For March - St. Patrick's Day, and

For April - An Earth Day event.

We intend to serve wholly with continuing our efforts in the initiatives and events presented above. Especially, initiatives representing our goals for the academic year of 2020-2021. [Reference 123](#) (Initiatives)

Atlanta

Executive Vice-President – Takia Tinsley



On the Atlanta Campus, I strive to continue to keep a foundation of inclusive and progressive growth, while we strive to promote a productive and influential atmosphere for our constituents. I aspire to maintain a community culture within Atlanta that any and every individual within our student body can call home, and during my term as Vice-President, there will be no room for any effort less than that.

Campus Initiatives

1. Speed Friending/ Voter Registration – During the month of September, the Student Government Association collaborated with the Panther Voter Coalition and Spotlight to host a speed networking event on our campus. This had been our first attempt at an in-person precautionary event during the pandemic. We had a short turnout overall, but as a test-run I would consider it a success; it gave my team experience in planning their own events, as well as lessons to take away for the next time around.
2. Early Voting Location & Lyft Rides – Similar to the early polling location GSU hosted in the Spring semester of 2020, with the help of Fulton County, SGA, PVC, and the Andrew Goodman Foundation worked the location between October 27-29th. We also obtained grants



to go toward Lyft codes students that reside within Fulton, as well as the counties that surround Fulton, could utilize for rides to, and from their local early polling locations; it was a success.

3. Election Night Watch Party – On The evening of Election Night on November 2nd, we collaborated with several orgs on campus to host a socially distant watch party inside of the SCE Ballroom. We had a high turnout, with students sticking around till the very end. It was a success.

Legislation

Special Orders

- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-01 Seating of the Senate Clerk
- 91-CSO-ATL-CX-01 Seating of Communications and Finance Directors
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-03 Seating of the Academic Affairs Committee Chair
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-04 Seating of the Government and Community Affairs Committee Chair
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-05 Seating of the Student Engagement Committee Chair
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-06 Seating of the Student Services Committee Chair
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-07 Seating of the Speaker Pro Tempore
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-08 Seating of Senators for Arts & Sciences and Robinson College of Business
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-09 Seating of the Student Services Committee Chair
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-11 Seating of College of Law Senators
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-10 Seating of Various Senators
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-12 Seating Senators of Various Colleges
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-13 Seating Freshman Liaisons
- 91-CSO-ATL-CX-03 Seating Finance Director
- 91-CSO-ATL-CX-04 Seating Communications Director
- 91-CSO-ATI-CX-05 Seating Atlanta Election Commission
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-14 Seating Head Senators
- 91-CSO-ATL-CL-15 Seating of the Student Services Chair
- 91-CSO-ATL-CX-06 An Atlanta Campus Special Order to Confirm Seating of the Atlanta Election Commission Vice Chair for Logistics for Spring 2021 elections

Bills

- 91-CB-ATL-02 Create an RHA Liaison

Spring Goals

1. Filling all vacancies within the administration



2. More productive and interpersonal interactions between senators as well as Executive Board members
 3. More collaborations across campuses
 4. Accountability from senators taken more serious
 5. Encourage setting the standard within SGA for student conduct, both on and off campus.
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Clarkston

Executive Vice-President – Kyle Kath

Campus Initiatives

1. More collaborated programs - SGA partnered with various departments, including the Dean of Students Office, History and Political Club, Student Health Promotions, and Panther Activities Council, to provide engaging programs for our students, including the first Self Care Week.
2. Clarkston Pool – Due to Covid-19, the reopening of the Clarkston pool will be revisited once public health conditions allow.

Legislation

There was no legislation passed.

Spring Goals

1. The Clarkston campus senate is recruiting for all positions. If you are interested in applying, please visit the SGA portal on pin.gsu.edu.
 2. More on-campus programs and events.
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Decatur

Executive Vice-President – Jeimy Martinez



I want the Decatur campus to feel included and be involved in all activities related to Georgia State University. We are a diverse body of students, and we are all at different places in our personal life. Some are recent High School graduates, and some are transfer students. We also have adults returning to further their education or parents who are first-time degree seekers. The one unifying theme with such a diverse group is that education is their goal at this time in their lives. Being active on the school social media accounts,

participating in events, and collaborating with the other campuses creates a sense of unity and purpose for all the students during their time here.

Campus Initiatives

This year was not without its challenges, and due to Covid-19, SGA held initiatives that were college-wide, taking place virtually and socially distanced.

1. Engagements – We mapped our plans for Spring 2021. We partnered with different organizations on campus to unite the student body, including the Earth Club who will be partnering with us and PAC to bring a mind and policy-oriented initiative focused on reducing plastic use around campus and connecting more with nature.



Legislation

Special Orders

- Seating of Student Engagement Chair- Star Harris will focus on broad student engagement and co-sponsorship with other clubs. Including her Spring 2021 initiative to educate the student body on the 46th Presidential Inauguration from Washington D.C. via our social media platforms.
- Seating of Executive Vice President- Jeimy Martinez, she will represent the Decatur campus in all University-wide Senate meetings. Participate in SGA events to get to know students and make herself available to the student body by being up to date with all training and responsibilities.

Spring Goals

Decatur Campus is looking forward to energizing the student body with new initiatives in the Spring.

1. Real Politics- Student Engagement Chair Star Harris will attend the 46th Presidential Inauguration in Washington D.C. and engage students via our social media platforms to educate students on the process of democracy in the United States of America.
2. Plants and Policy- Making a Kokedama, an opportunity for PAC, Earth Club, and SGA to collaborate in a beneficial project for students' mental health and the importance of reducing plastic in areas we may not have considered before, such as plastic planters.
3. Advocate eliminating plastic straws and bags in Decatur campus- An opportunity for the student body to make a united effort to do their part to reduce plastic use worldwide.
4. Recruit members- We will be using social media platforms, an SGA recruiting table, and flyers.



Dunwoody

Executive Vice-President – Michelle Martinez

Campus Initiatives

1. Recruitment Initiative: Senator Aguirre’s recruitment idea consisted of reaching out to students via email since many students check their school email. She reached out to club advisors on campus via email to spread awareness to students. Dunwoody’s Student Government Association the overall focused on recruitment to have more teamwork towards the improving of campus life.
2. Extension of Library Office Hours Initiative: While working on the Flower Initiative as a committee member, Senator Sirajo also worked on extending the library office hours on the Dunwoody Campus. He worked with the library department to discuss extension of library office hours to accommodate students during midterms and finals week. After careful consideration, the Library department advised that due to the pandemic, there are already very few students attending the Library, therefore, it is possible that there were not going to be many students in the library during midterms/finals week.

Legislation

There was no legislation passed.

Spring Goals

For the Spring semester, Dunwoody’s Student Government Association will continue to recruit officers and inquire on what could help students during this pandemic to achieve their academic goals. We will focus on how we can help you and improve campus life for students on the Dunwoody campus.



Newton

Executive Vice-President – Carlos Porter

My goal for the Newton campus is to continue to serve the students here on Newton and meet them where they are. Although we are still limited in our abilities given the current pandemic, we still have been able to make an impact, by serving food when we can and giving our students the resources needed to succeed.

Campus Initiatives

1. One of our planned events was a “Get to Know SGA” event where we advertised to the students on campus directly by means of a table presentation. The duration of this event lasted 2 whole weeks. The two-week duration allowed us to reach the maximum number of students, as some are only on campus every other week. Out of this event, our SGA has already seen an increased interest, and an application for a senator position has already been submitted and approved.
2. Another event is our Newton SGA Winter Retreat, which also featured the PAC on our campus. This retreat provided an opportunity for PAC and SGA to plan our events together for the spring semester, as well as learn to work together. Out of this retreat, we feel that we are prepared to excel in our initiatives for the Spring semester.

Legislation

So far, no legislation has been passed by the Senate yet, however we do have upcoming legislation which will be submitted in the Spring semester.

Spring Goals

For the spring semester, I have two main goals. The first goal is to grow the SGA on Newton and fill all our vacancies. I hope to be able to have a full executive board and legislative board.

My second goal is to interact more with the students. My senators already have events being worked on that will benefit both the SGA and the students.