

Seattle University

ScholarWorks @ SeattleU

The Spectator Online

Newspapers

10-22-2020

Students Share Thoughts on Upcoming Political Election

Ben Wiley

Seattle University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online>

Recommended Citation

Wiley, Ben, "Students Share Thoughts on Upcoming Political Election" (2020). *The Spectator Online*. 387.
<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/387>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Newspapers at ScholarWorks @ SeattleU. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Spectator Online by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ SeattleU.



Students Share Thoughts on Upcoming Political Election

Ben Wiley, Author

With the upcoming election only a few weeks away, political clubs at Seattle University are employing various tactics to encourage members of the student body to vote in not just the national election, but also state and local ones.

Seattle U sponsors various clubs that encourage political engagement on campus. The Political Science Club provides a space for students to discuss current political issues in the world, understand the political system and participate in social movements.

Additional clubs, such as the Seattle U Conservative Union (SUCU), Seattle U Young Democrats and Seattle U Young Democratic Socialists provide safe areas for students with many views to share their opinions on political issues.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for these clubs to meet and hold events to engage students in the political process. The Political Science Club planned to hold a virtual discussion Oct. 15 during the second scheduled presidential debate, but plans changed when the debate got cancelled after President Trump tested positive for COVID-19.

Political Science Club President Sophia Annest, a third-year political science and strategic communication double major, explained that the club has moved their virtual discussion to Oct. 22 after the third presidential debate. In this discussion, they plan to talk about the upcoming election and encourage students to vote.

Students can find more information about this event on the Political Science Club's Instagram page, @supolisci_club and on ConnectSU. With regards to the upcoming election, Annest highlighted the importance and impact it has and will have.

"There is a lot to unpack with the upcoming election. Given the current state of racial injustice and pandemic in this country, I believe it has never been more important to vote," Annest said. "Whether you consider yourself 'political' or not, basic human rights are on the line and that alone should be enough to motivate people to exercise their right to vote. I am uncertain of what the outcome of this election will be, but I do know that whatever happens, it will have a lasting impact on our future."

Similarly, the Seattle U Young Democrats Club is providing opportunities for Seattle U students to engage in the political process at all levels. The main purpose of the club's meetings is to get members involved in politics by telling them about political opportunities in Seattle and the greater Washington area as well as things happening in the SU community about elections such as the history department having a panel and SGSU having a candidate forum. Club President Natalie Kenoyer, a second-year history and political science double major, stressed the importance of political involvement and discussion in the Seattle area and beyond, especially during trying times like the present.



"I definitely think that this election is historical and will be very important," Kenoyer said. "I believe that people should be voting, as even if their identity and livelihood isn't represented on the ballot, their neighbors, family members and friends' rights are on the line during this election."

In contrast to the Young Democrats Club, SUCU has not hosted any events this quarter to raise voter awareness. According to SUCU President Matthew Wald, a third-year nursing major, the club traditionally hosts informal weekly meetings for open discussions, as well as more formal quarterly presentations with invited guests.

"SUCU has very well-informed students. I appreciate the people in our club, many who do political events on their own" Wald said. "Seattle U is mostly a left-wing campus, but we have made room for conservative thought."

In addition to partisan organizations, Seattle U has clubs that engage in political action on specific issues. The Sustainable Student Action Club is an environmental justice group that focuses on political education and student organizing regarding climate change.

Although the club has had a slow start to the year and not focused too much attention on the election, president Emily Nielson, a third-year public affairs major, emphasized the importance of voting.

"In recent years, the importance of voting has been elevated, but so too have the justified critiques that systemic issues make voting not a silver bullet for creating change," Nielson said. "I resonated with Angela Davis' take on the election—that we need to vote for candidates who will be most responsive to pressure from grassroots movements urging them to change. I'm very nervous about voter suppression and how people throughout the country are going to be able to safely vote with the context of COVID."

These politically focused clubs have created spaces for debate and a sharing of opinions. Clubs like the Young Democrats Club have directly taken action to get members involved in and thinking about politics. With the election only two weeks away, it is imperative that these clubs continue encouraging Seattle U students to vote and remain politically active.