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11-15-2021

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Recommended Citation

Hood, Claire, "2021 Election: SGSU Introduces Co-Representatives" (2021). *The Spectator Online*. 456.
<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/spectator-online/456>

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2021 Election: SGSU Introduces Co-Representatives

Claire Hood, Volunteer Reporter

From Oct. 20 to 23, the Student Government of Seattle University (SGSU) held elections for nine representative positions. Non-Traditional Representative, Transfer Representative and Multicultural Representative were three of the available positions.

SGSU representatives meet with students and on-campus organizations to help improve the student experience. Each representative holds weekly office hours for students to raise concerns, access resources and promote discourse about students' needs.

In conjunction with information that students present to the representatives, their projects are guided by the Seattle University climate survey. The survey consists of a series of questions used to analyze how students feel supported and areas where improvements can be made.

The election for Non-Traditional representative resulted in a near tie between Grace Harvey and Irena Hawkins. A non-traditional student at Seattle U is someone who is 25 years old or older, a veteran or a parent. In past years, this position has been unfilled.

Prior to the election, Harvey and Hawkins met for coffee to discuss ideas and plans for the role. When the election results came back as a near tie, the election officials announced a runoff election.

Neither Harvey or Hawkins wanted to participate in a runoff election, so the candidates proposed that they share the position as co-representatives. The election officials agreed to this proposal and created a non-traditional co-representative role for Harvey and Hawkins.

Harvey is excited to work with a co-representative.

"It's the ideal situation. I wildly underestimated how beneficial it is having someone else in the room, in this space, who is also 10 years older than everyone else. It's incredible and we split the hours which makes it so much easier," Harvey said.

Identifying and getting in contact with non-traditional students is first on Harvey's agenda. Their non-traditional student experience has given them insight about when this group of students is on campus. Harvey has noticed non-traditional students are rarely on campus, and innovation is needed to create events designed for this population.

Serving the students alongside Harvey and Hawkins is Veng "Leap" Chan, the newly elected Transfer Representative.



Choosing to go paper-free and run an online campaign, Chan handed out cookies with an iPad in hand during the Cookies with Candidates event put on by SGSU. On the iPad, he displayed campaign posters and ideas for the position. Chan did this despite the student government office providing candidates with supplies for posters and a reimbursement program for expenses.

Chan identified with a number of the available positions including transfer representative and international student representative, so the decision of which position to run for was complex.

He eventually decided to run for the transfer student representative position because of the connections he has built with fellow transfer students. At the club fair, Chan first learned about SGSU.

“They told me what they did and how you can make the voice of students heard. So, I really wanted to be a part of that, help unify the student voices, tell the Administration what is going on and bring some solutions to them,” Chan said.

Chan’s first goal is to learn more about transfer students’ experiences through a survey. He plans to meet with the Reidy Collegium and work with the staff to increase support for transfer students.

Newly elected multicultural representative Braelyn Scheer joins Harvey, Hawkins and Chan as new members of SGSU. Scheer ran unopposed and chose to help other candidates with their election campaigns.

As the multicultural representative, she plans to focus on ensuring the institution follows through initiatives and is held accountable. In tandem with accountability, Scheer plans to emphasize advocacy in her role by listening and learning from students’ needs.

A consistent concern Scheer has is the availability of scholarships for underrepresented students. She plans to work with the student government team and support offices on campus to ensure and develop scholarships for these students.

“Don’t be afraid to interact with us. I am just the same confused student as everyone else. I am trying my best. We are going to work to do our best,” Scheer said. “Doing our best work happens when people tell us what they need to see on their campus. We are here to represent. If you have concerns, come tell us so we can help.”

All representatives are here to support all students at Seattle U. Each representative has their own unique passion that drives them to represent students and make this campus a better place for all.