

Student Senate elects new officers for 2021

GRACIE WILSON
AU-Live Managing Editor

The Ashland University Student Senate elections earlier this month brought new senators to executive office who began their term officially on April 13.

Elected officers bring their voices to the senate floor in an effort to enact change on campus for the benefit of all students who attend AU.

“It’s important to make sure that everyone has a voice and so I really want to try my best to work with the other senators so that the university implements policies that bring out care for their students and make sure that they feel heard, not suppressed,” Reina Britt, executive officer of academic affairs said.

In giving the students a voice across campus, the senators have to bring their own voice; and communication has been said to be key in the new senator’s plans.

“One thing that’s at the forefront is that I want to start talking about better ways of communicating with students,” Sophie Mowry, executive officer of student affairs said. “Whether that’s social media, or other ways to just get the conversation going.

In past years, senate hosted a student speak-out where students could come and speak to senate and faculty about campus matters. Due to Coronavirus concerns this has not happened since 2019.

“I want to try and introduce an academic speak out in addition to that because I know so many people on this campus who have issues with credit transfers or core and need to work those issues out,” Britt said.

In light of events that have taken place in the recent past on campus, senators have aimed to build initiatives for their term that would benefit the students on campus.

“With the protest that Elevate hosted, countless things that have happened on this campus with the clothesline project...people need to realize that students are the key part of this campus,” Britt said. “Without the students, we wouldn’t be here.”

Mowry also hopes to keep discussions going about topics in recent discussion on campus such as sexual assault awareness

“I totally support any victims that come out and that they want to talk about their circumstances

and their past,” she said. “I fully support calling out the faculty and administration for the wrongs that have been done in the past. However, I also believe that we need to do this in a very professional and positive way.

Along with recent issues regarding sexual assault and awareness on campus, initiatives are also being brought to improve efforts for diversity and inclusion on campus.

“I think a big portion of understanding these problems is to have empathy for others and trying to have a lot of understanding,” Alena Aguayo, diversity and inclusion representative said.

The main initiative is to set up a more effective incident reporting process that would make people feel safe coming forward about issues so that they can be better solved in the future.

“I feel like I’ve always been really passionate about diversity topics and inclusion just because I’m a woman of color and I know the struggle,” Aguayo said. “I just want to use my own talents and skills to make the AU-Community, for minority students, a better place.

As a result, Aguayo hopes to make diversity and inclusion a more prominent part of the campus culture and get people excited about new initiatives.

“I would like to see more events and celebrations of diversity including training on how to be an effective ally, but in a fun way so that people will be encouraged to go and learn more,” she said.

In talking about the issues already present on campus, the senators also hope to usher in the new and solve the problems that campus faces.

“I just want to start more conversations about stuff that’s already being talked about,” Mowry said. “I want to see changes being made.

Not only does being on student senate help the senators enact change on their campus currently, but they also feel it helps them set up their future.

“I see this as a springboard for me and other people to use the experience that we do now in the future,” Mowry said. “The actions that we do now are going to affect us and I want whatever choices we make, whatever actions we do, to benefit us now...and also benefit us in the future.”

The experience is also beneficial in Aguayo’s eyes as she feels her term is going to be an eye-open-

ing experience that also helps her in her future as a political science major.

“I’m really excited and if anyone needs anything, I want to be someone they can come to,” she said.

The senate is led by an Executive President, and for this term the student body has elected Yosolajesu Olujide-Ajibade, to the role.

“I decided to run for Executive President because I really want to work on shifting the culture here at AU surrounding both Student Senate and our campus climate as a whole,” she said. “This past election, there was such a great turnout...and in years to come I hope it will continue to grow.”

This is not the first time Olujide-Ajibade has served on senate as she has served in the past years as well.

“It was such an honor to serve these past two terms with all the experienced and seasoned senators,” she said. “While the upcoming term may seem ‘young’...I am already feeling super encouraged by the fresh new ideas that they are all bringing.”

Her new goals are in line with those of the other senators as she aims to make sure student voices are being heard over the course of her term and in the time to come after.

“My ultimate goal during my presidency is to place the voice of the students at the forefront of my agenda, and I look forward to promoting the much needed steps towards change for our students,” Olujide-Ajibade said.

While the students who are currently on senate will serve into 2022, that does not mean that others cannot get involved in senate. In the fall 2021 semester, senate will be looking to fill more positions where other campus community members can get involved.

“I know there’s been a lot of attention drawn to senate, both positive and negative, but it’s also getting people more involved and more interested in it,” Mowry said.

Students who are interested are welcomed to run for the senate positions that will become open next semester and serve alongside the recently elected executive board.

“We always say that we want to give a voice to the students, and we can,” Britt said. “I really encourage all students to run for senate because it shouldn’t just be a closed off society...senate is supposed to represent the entirety of the university.



SUBMITTED BY: YOSOLAJESU OLUJIDE-AJIBADE
Yosolajesu Olujide-Ajibade, executive president of Student Senate.



SUBMITTED BY: SOPHIE MOWRY
Sophie Mowry, executive officer of student affairs.



SUBMITTED BY: ALENA AGUAYO
Alena Aguayo, diversity and inclusion representative.



SUBMITTED BY: REINA BRITT
Reina Britt, executive officer of academic affairs.

Main Street Plaza set to open early June

EVAN LAUX
News Editor

At a recent city council meeting, Mayor Matt Miller announced that he anticipates the “Main Street Plaza” to be open by early June.

The city accepted a \$196,000 grant at the meeting, which will be put towards the construction of the plaza.

Simonson Construction has been working on the project since it was approved last year, and much of the exterior brick wall has been finished.

The plaza sits directly beside Ohio Fire Pizza and across the street from Ashley’s Candy and Nut Shoppe.

“Main Street Plaza is coming right along,” Miller said. “I think it’s really piqued people’s interest to see the brick going up.”

Within the walls, the plaza will feature a green turf courtyard, an outdoor stage wired for lighting and sound covered by a pergola and life sized bronze statues of a lion, tiger and bear.

The former plan to include a splash pad within the plaza has since been dropped.

Miller noted that a concert is



EVAN LAUX
Main Street Plaza is situated directly beside Ohio Fire Pizza.

already scheduled at the plaza for mid-June and other community events will likely be held at later dates.

“Anything new downtown is a plus,” Ohio Fire Pizza owner Brad Bryan said. “My folks were from Polk back in the 40s and they said that on a Saturday night you couldn’t get down the streets of Ashland. It’s nice to see downtown come back to life.”

Ohio Fire Pizza opened in Octo-

ber of last year, and Bryan anticipates that the plaza will bring in more foot traffic to the restaurant and other local businesses nearby.

“It’s great to see downtown slowly being revitalized and bolstered up,” Bryan said.

Ashley Kline of Ashley’s Candy and Nut Shoppe is also optimistic about the new plaza.

“It’ll be nice to look out the window and see more people walking up and down the street,” Kline

Second annual “Make Ashland Sparkle” cleanup approaching

EVAN LAUX
News Editor

Volunteers in Ashland will spread out on April 24 for another city-wide cleanup in efforts to “Make Ashland Sparkle.”

The beautification event is in its second year, and has volunteers painting fire hydrants and trash cans, picking up litter along major streets and sprucing up mulch beds downtown and in city parks.

Two new county parks are included in this year’s efforts. Volunteers are being sought to stain the boardwalk and picnic pavilion at the Audubon Wetlands Preserve and the bridge, pavilion and observation tower at Byers Woods.

Event sponsors are the Rotary Club of Ashland, Ashland County Ministerial Association, City of Ashland and Norma June Foundation.

Last year’s Make Ashland Sparkle was a success, according to Lee Peters, a past president of the Rotary Club and lead organizer of the event. The event was held in September instead of April due to the pandemic, and drew over 100 volunteers.

From now on, the clean-up day

will be scheduled on the last Saturday in April each year.

“It’s great timing as we are coming back out of Covid,” said Dave Langdon, pastor of the Ashland Church of the Nazarene. “Spring is in the air and everyone is excited to get outside again. This is a great opportunity for us to come together and make a positive impact for our community.”

Check-in will begin at 8:30 a.m. at Corner Park downtown. The kickoff will be at 9 a.m., and volunteers will then head to their designated assignments. Lunch will be provided back at Corner Park from 11:30 a.m. until noon. Paint and cleaning supplies will be provided.

“We had a great event last year with over 100 volunteers from all facets of our community who graciously gave of their time to help beautify our city. We’re even more excited this year for more people to participate and tackle more corners of our city,” said Amanda Patterson, community outreach coordinator for the city.

The rain date is May 1.