

ASG announces mental health initiative, new appointees

Hassan Javed, News writer | February 25, 2021



Allegheny Student Government's first meeting of module two brought about new appointees and propositions, including a new initiative regarding mental health awareness.

With no guest speakers, ASG's general assembly commenced with cabinet reports at 7:33 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23, via Zoom.

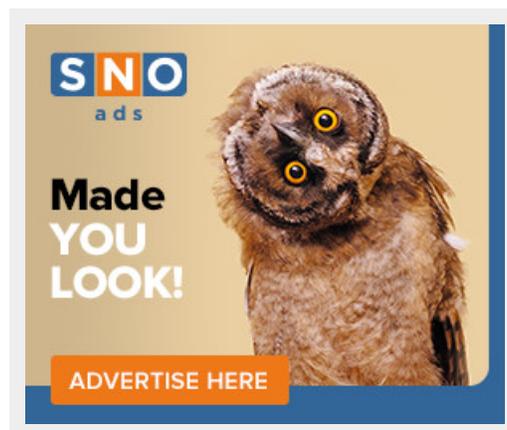
Chief of Staff Emma Godel, '21, started off her report by putting forth a new initiative, proposing to address mental health and spread awareness of mental health issues.

"Vice President of Student Life and Dean of Students April Thompson along with a few other cabinet members (of ASG) all agree that mental health, specifically the development and maintenance of mental illness, is particularly a big issue on campus," Godel said.

Godel then introduced a brief presentation regarding her initiative. With the name "Strive to Thrive," Godel hopes for her new initiative to operate as a pseudo-hybrid of Gator Day and the Student Involvement Fair. The initiative, Godel said, promotes peer support, connection building and hopes to see students helping students. Godel hopes that substance abuse management, body positivity and sexual assault awareness are among the themes that will be promoted through the event.

"This event is not a cure or ASG becoming professional therapists," Godel said.

The proposed event would act as a platform where students can address mental health issues and talk about them in a public setting rather than acting as a professional clinic. Godel also emphasized that she wanted this to be a positive event but did not want to cross the line into what she described as "toxic positivity."



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most of the time (toxic positivity) is using phrases like 'things could be worse' or 'good vibes only,'" Godel said. "Sometimes life really does throw us a few curveballs and we don't want to wash over that and say 'good vibes only.' "

Dr. Gabrielle Morrow of the Allegheny College Health Agency, Director of Counseling and Personal Development Center Trae Yeckley and the Dean of Students Office are all in support of the event, according to Godel. Godel hopes her efforts become collaborative between ASG and various other student organizations.

"Later this week I will be meeting with (Advisor of GAP and Fraternity/Sorority Life) Casey Cole " Godel said. "I don't want this to be solely the ASG's baby."

Saturday, May 8, is the tentative date for the event.

"We have a better chance of weather being more enjoyable (in May)," Godel said. "We (will) have more space to do outdoor events."

Godel gave brief descriptions of what the event entails, assuming it continues as scheduled.

"I talked to Doctor Morrow about other features of this event, we can absolutely do t-shirts as long as we wear gloves," Godel said.

She also mentioned the possibility of food trucks being allowed on campus along with live music.

"I think it's time that we as a society and a community of students acknowledge the mental pandemic that is plaguing our students," said Noah Tart, '22, Director of Finance.

Attorney General Jack Parker, '22, then commenced his report. Parker announced that an in-person debate will be held for the ASG election on March 9. Only the candidates, the moderator, Parker and Godel will be in attendance, as the debate will be broadcast live to the student body.

Parker said the debate will follow a town hall format, and the moderator for the debate is tentatively Provost and Dean of the College Ron Cole, '87. Student questions will be taken anonymously — unless stated otherwise — most likely via Google Forms.

Director of Communications and Press Bree Gray, '23, followed by presenting her initiative to reach out to quarantined students with "get well soon" cards.

"It's important to show (the quarantined students) that somebody is thinking about (them)," Gray said.

Following Gray, Tart presented the ASG financial request which included \$6,700 for the purchase of CDC-approved masks for every student who has returned to campus for module two. Tart then nominated Maya Ginter-Frankovitch, '22, as representative on the Finance and Facilities Committee.

Vice President of the Class of 2023 Lucas Biniewski raised the motion to approve the finance request and was seconded by Senator Payne Rizzer, '24. The motion passed unanimously.

Biniewski also raised the motion to induct Ginter-Frankovitch into the FFC and was seconded by President of the Class of 2023 Andi Rieser, '23. The motion passed unanimously.

Director of Diversity and Inclusion Peter Alegre, '23, followed by announcing his intention to establish a “community fridge” on campus for students and the greater community.

“So far I’ve been hearing some good responses but right now it’s all preliminary,” Alegre said.

Director of Community Relations Elias Bullock-Moreno, '23, followed by saying that he intends to start a “restaurant competition” through which students will have the chance to determine the best food in town.

No tentative date or structure was announced regarding the proposal.

Precious Taylor, '22, was introduced to the GA as a nominee for the Senate. Taylor briefly introduced herself before accepting the nomination.

Biniewski raised the motion to swear in Taylor to the Senate and was seconded by President of the Class of 2021 Jasmine Ramirez, '21. The motion passed unanimously, and Precious Taylor, '22, was sworn in by President Abdikadir Lugundi, '21.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

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