Gardin + Evans Administration Presents:
The 55th Session of the Student Government Association of Appalachian State University’s Midterm Report

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Amplifying All Voices

Fall 2021
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Student Body Vice President DJ Evans

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Director of Academic Affairs Thomas McNeil
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Director of Campus Resources Olivia Shepherd
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Treasurer Ariela Allen
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Senator Marissa Contreras
Senator Brenna Dowd
Senator Mary Blake Harris
Senator Madison Neisz

Campus Resources Committee
Chair: Senator Bailey Shannon
Senator Christopher Howell
Senator Ben Karriker

Academic Affairs Committee
Chair: Senator Brayden Benkiel-Robinson
Senator Ayden Bilicki
Senator Connery Martin
Senator Anthony Ross
Senator Nick Siringo

Diversity & Inclusion Committee
Chair: Senator Madison Harris
Senator Amarah Din
Senator Anizet Lopez-Flores
Senator Benjamin Negin
Senator Karol Vite-Perez

Rules Committee
Chair: Senator Connor Schlaline
Senator Quson Brown
Senator Hunter Clark
Senator Kaylee Greene
Senator Jake Jenson
Senator Kammy Kasher
Senator Evan Martino
Senator & RR Officer Gabe Montalbano
Senator JP Neri
Pillars of the Gardin + Evans Administration

Before beginning the Midterm Report, the reader must understand the four pillars which the Gardin + Evans administration seeks to implement when working to advocate for Appalachian State University’s student body:

1. **Accountability**: Between listening sessions, town halls, and task forces, we have provided more than enough information for our administrators to understand what the student body needs. One of the most critical roles that the Student Government plays is holding our university administration accountable for any shortcomings or promised improvements to student life. It is not the student body’s responsibility, nor the Student Government, to take the university’s problems upon themselves, but it seems we must ensure that our paid university officials are held accountable. As students, our primary responsibility is to our personal growth and educational success. We have too much on our plates to be doing the work that others are being paid to do.

   *Transparency*

   - Our university administration must provide quick and honest communication regarding essential issues to our community’s foundation and success. Furthermore, we expect our university officials to be more vocally transparent concerning their stance on current social issues and problems that negatively impact our marginalized students, faculty, and staff.

   *Resource Management*

   - Appalachian State University already possesses several resources to help students along their journey of personal development. However, these resources go undetected by students because they are often hidden in an email or lost in a pamphlet. We will dedicate relentless energy to ensure these resources are being advertised to the community and provide them with the necessary support to guarantee their success.

   *Administration Accessibility*

   - It is impossible to communicate student concerns if our administrators are inaccessible. The lack of intentionality has led to meaningless conversations that yield no solutions. Our administrators are paid officials who should be held accountable for their actions and made available to answer questions and address
students’ needs. We intend to ensure that our university officials establish better communication channels between the student body and administration.

**BIPOC Faculty/Staff Retention**

- Admissions has identified that Appalachian State University has seen a decline in retention rates regarding students of color, specifically Black students and Black faculty members. The university must perform exit interviews with students, faculty, and staff of color regarding their university experience so that administrators can identify shortcomings and areas where these essential members of our community need more support. The data from these interviews should be computed into a report and made public to the community to ensure that our university leadership is held accountable.

2. **Equity**: Community Organizations, such as BlackAtAppState, have spotlighted the injustices existing at our university. The narratives and experiences that marginalized students have bravely shared brought attention to their treatment. It is imperative that we not let those voices go to waste and utilize them to enact change within our community. We believe it is essential to vocally express our dedication to BIPOC, trans-identifying folx, LGBTQIA+, and undocumented students, faculty, and staff. It is not only crucial to voice our support for these oppressed identities, but for action to go behind it. With an overwhelmingly white and male cabinet, our university administration does not represent the different backgrounds, identities, and perspectives that App State offers.

**Amplifying Marginalized Voices**

- Our experiences of being silenced have driven our passion for amplifying all voices. However, to do that effectively, we recognize that we must listen to you first. We will identify what concerns you face through intentional conversations, strategize solutions together, and follow up with actionable items.

**Supporting Pre-Existing Organizations**

- In addition to being amplified, voices must be listened to as well. We want to show our support in implementing the demands that BlackAtAppState has submitted to the university administration. Black students created these demands with varying identities that followed the footsteps of the Black alumni before them. We would be amiss if we did not vocalize our support for these marginalized students as they are constantly exhausting themselves to make our university a better place. Additionally, Black students’ experiences bravely shared through the
BlackAtAppState platform cannot be ignored and must be used to address university problems.

Addressing Student Poverty

- Initiatives such as the Mountaineer Emergency Fund need to be available all the time, not only in times of a global health crisis. It is no secret that the Appalachian State community faces a significant food and housing insecurity crisis. Expanding our food pantry and its impact will be a top priority of our administration as we have found that our staff members are relying heavily on the pantry as a resource. When the pandemic forced many of us to vacate residence halls last year, many students were forced to go back to unhealthy environments or find alternative options quickly. Our administration will work diligently with university leadership to create realistic and sustainable solutions so that students can always feel safe and comfortable within their environments.

Student Employment

- The pandemic has impacted each of us deeper than anyone could ever imagine. Maintaining a job while remaining diligent in your studies is no easy task, so we must provide adequate care and support to these individuals. Student-workers across campus lost their jobs without being offered very much support and notice. Our RAs, who work tirelessly at their job, answer every duty call, and remain calm in emergencies, are not even afforded free housing due to their service. The Department of Housing must improve these conditions, and our university must create more employment opportunities for the community.

3. **Wellness:** The Gardin+Evans team thoroughly invests themselves in holistic wellness. As students, it’s easy to normalize unhealthy lifestyles while also promoting holistic health for others. We convince ourselves that eating one meal a day is typical or that a hectic sleep schedule is just part of the college experience. Academics take up only a portion of our lives but can affect the other pieces just as they affect our academics. That is why our students need to have a break where they are not expected to complete any obligations other than taking care of themselves. You could be the most organized student and still fall behind because of the workload from differing factors in your life. Additionally, we believe that wellness includes taking care of our environment and our surrounding community.
Resource Upkeep

- Have you ever heard of Mountaineer MealShare? If not, that is understandable but emphasizes why we must be better as an organization when advertising and maintaining resources designed to support our student body’s welfare. Mountaineer MealShare was created by the ClaytonLee Administration and is a program designed to provide additional meal plan money for students who need it the most. Through this program, Mountaineers could donate any extra meal plan money they didn’t need or didn’t intend to use. Any students who found themselves running low on meal plan money could apply for an amount.

Holistic Health

- The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the message that your health and wellbeing as a student must come first! However, as a university, we simply do not have the adequate resources necessary to ensure that our students are thriving both inside and outside the classroom regarding their health. Our counseling center must prioritize advancing Telehealth services to our community and increasing the representation of counselors of color so that all students can feel comfortable about receiving care. Additionally, we expect the university to be diligent in the search and hiring process of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE). Victims are entitled to well-trained, professional care. Our administration will relentlessly pursue expanding our current mental health resources as they are vital for our community’s health.

Environmental Sustainability

- We hope that this campus will be Carbon Neutral by 2025. We want to continue to support the work of SGA, ClimAct, and others who have raised the pressure on the university to meet this expectation. Our administration will constantly challenge the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees to commit to this action through our direct line of communication. Achieving environmental justice on our campus is possible, but it will take a collaborative effort from multiple individuals. This should be a top priority of the university, as they state on their sustainability website, “Sustainability at Appalachian State University is not a trend, it is a tradition.” Our environment is precious, and as global citizens, we should appreciate its value and protect it at all costs.

Mental Health Days

- North Carolina State and UNC-Chapel Hill are just two examples of universities that prioritized their students’ mental, emotional, and physical health these past
few years by providing them with various forms of academic relief, including Mental Health Days. Considering the relative lack of support, Appalachian State students have shown incredible resilience throughout this entire pandemic. As a community, we have endured a global health crisis, cries for diversity to be taken seriously on our campus, deaths of multiple Mountaineers, a stressful election, and asynchronous virtual classes, amongst many other hardships that have impacted us all differently. In all recent semesters, the lack of mandated mental health days reinforces the message that we cannot rely on administrators to act in the students’ best interest. Instead, it takes dedicated student leaders to spearhead initiatives and collaborate with others to ensure we look out for one another. Previous semester’s lack of wellness days has led SGA to pursue alternate academic relief options, such as Pass/No Credit for Fall ‘20 and Spring ‘21. The latter of which was denied by the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee and the Provost. Our administration will represent a group you can depend on to fight for your best interests every day.

4. **Engagement**: The resocialization process from distance learning back to in-person presents a difficult challenge. With the vaccine being administered around the nation, we are starting, while still following suggested health guidelines, to reintegrate back into the public sphere. Students deserve to have access to everything that the college experience offers but cannot properly do so because of their distance. The pandemic has shown us that we can adapt, modify, and evolve our learning, engagement, and communication methods. That is why we want to stress the importance of learning from the pandemic instead of regressing to our old ways of life. Engagement has always been the cornerstone of college life and can make all the difference in the efficacy of students’ education and the pursuit of their personal goals.

**Reintegartion**

- Though we are beginning to reintegrate back into society, we understand that not every person on campus has been vaccinated. There are still potential risks that could come out of in-person socialization, and those are risks we are not willing to take. Going into the new year, our university must prioritize our students, faculty, and staff’s health and safety. With that being said, we want to ensure that students are receiving the best education possible and enjoying what student life has to offer. We are against going back to the society that we once knew and encouraging moving forward into a better future than the past.

**Innovative Communication Methods**
For us to effectively amplify voices, we must first listen with intentionality. This requires us to review current communication methods and develop new ones so that we can address your concerns. Through a Fraternity and Sorority Life Advisory Board, individuals a part of various Greek organizations will provide student input regarding the decisions that will directly impact them. Additionally, we will pursue the creation of Questioning Sessions, where administrators will appear in-person and be available to now answer your questions. These methods are just some of the ways we plan to have more accountability and accessibility from those who have the power to make a change, as that will remain a top priority of our administration.

**Increasing Senate Functionality**

- Your senators work hard and have created impactful legislation throughout the academic year. In previous years, we have seen that our time could be utilized more efficiently because it comes at the student body’s expense if it is not. SGA has so much potential to become a powerful platform in terms of advocacy and action, but to reach that goal, we have to learn to work together. We need to create an environment where all senators are knowledgeable and well-trained regarding procedures, feel that their voices are being heard, and prioritize treating other senators with respect as we strive to be the best at our number one obligation, which is to advocate for the student body who trusted us with their votes and confidence. Letting them down is simply not an option.

**Engagement Initiatives**

- As a community with over 500 various clubs and organizations, we acknowledge that fantastic work is being accomplished on and off-campus every day. Your contributions, activities, and sacrifices that are making this community excel deserve recognition and support! We will highlight you and create clear communication lines so that you can inform us of how to serve you and your organization’s best interests.
Preface to the Midterm Report

Each report provides a detailed description of the actions taken to uphold the applicable pillar to illustrate Cabinet and Senate’s commitment to the values of the Gardin + Evans Administration.

**Student Body President Bailey Gardin and Vice President DJ Evans**

*Note: the accomplishments of the Gardin + Evans Administration (Cabinet & Senate) have been summarized into bullet points to provide the reader with a concise, yet detailed explanation of their accomplishments*

**Pillar: Accountability**

Committed to accountability both internally and externally, the Gardin + Evans Administration has taken the following steps to increase the transparency within SGA and between the organization and the study body:

- Inviting Senate President Trey Blackwood to all Cabinet meetings and forwarding him the notes, allowing for open communication between Senate leadership and Cabinet leadership regarding Cabinet’s efforts to support the student body.
- Both meeting with senators and inviting them to meetings with administration and other student leaders, allowing for open communication between Senate and Cabinet members. The goal being that the support of Senate members can lead to further aid for the student body.
- Hosting bi-weekly meetings with Senate leadership and SGA advisors—Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Jeff Cathey and Dean of Students Judy Haas—to create a community in which both Senate and Cabinet leadership’s voices contribute to larger conversations about SGA.
- Implementing a Cabinet three-strike rule and 6-7 weekly office hours requirement as means to ensure that Cabinet members implement their strategic plans, which aim to improve the wellbeing of the student body.
- Creating transparency between university administration, SGA, and ultimately the student body by communicating with administrators regarding support for the student body.

**Pillar: Equity**

Aware of the injustice minority communities such as the BIPOC, trans-identifying folx, LGBTQIA+, and undocumented students, faculty, and staff face both on Appalachian State University’s campus and within the High Country community, the Gardin + Evans Administration has taken the following actions:
- Held an Open Mic Night event that provided students with the opportunity to publicly voice their needs from the University and struggles within its community.
- Released a statement in support of the LGBTQIA+ community, highlighting Pride Month and different LGBTQIA+ campus leaders.
- Addressed the housing crisis by educating SGA members during a housing seminar at an SGA Senate meeting and supervising the Student Housing Fair on Nov 30th, 2021.
- Holding monthly meetings with APP PD to ensure minority voices are amplified in spaces typically lacking their insight.
- Addressed the food insecurity many students face by releasing a Food Pantry video onto the SGA Instagram educating the student body on the different resources available to support their needs. This video was recognized on the state level by the Association of Student Governments (January 2022) and earned a $500.00 donation to support ASU food pantries.
- Released a statement advocating for Nikole Hannah-Jones (Chapel Hill) and condemning Chapel Hill for their actions of unjustly denying her tenure. Additionally, in a separate statement, SGA condemned NC Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson’s offensive comments against the LGBTQIA+ community, to demonstrate this administration’s commitment to equity and inclusion outside of the University.

Pillar: Wellness

The Gardin + Evans Administration’s emphasis on holistic wellness means not only promoting academic success among the University’s student body but facilitating an environment that supports their mental health as well. This approach also acknowledges the intersectionality between student wellness and that of the High Country community at large, as well as the challenging impact COVID-19 has had on both:

- Advocated for the administration to acknowledge the effects winter has on student health by speaking directly with the Chancellor and members of her Cabinet.
- The Senate’s Campus Resources Committee released a statement on Instagram, illustrating the Senate's shared dedication to increasing student wellbeing.
- Addressed COVID-19’s impact on campus wellness in the following ways: attending weekly meetings with the Chancellor's Cabinet to discuss vaccination efforts and campus wellness; working with the Chancellor and her team to incentivize students to get vaccinated, and to report their vaccination status; releasing a statement encouraging vaccinations; and creating a “Welcome Back” video encouraging students to get vaccinated at the beginning of the 2021-22 academic year.
- Additionally, SGA succeeded—in collaboration with the Chancellor, her team, and other constituent groups on campus (with representation from faculty, staff, deans, etc.)—in creating a policy that mandates faculty and staff not simply attest, but verify their vaccination status—identical to the requirement for students.
• All their efforts in conjunction with Chancellor Everts, her team, and other SGA members have raised the verified student vaccination rate from 45% (beginning of Fall 2021) to 81% (Spring 2022).

**Pillar: Engagement**

Focusing on providing students with ways to become more engaged within SGA, with SGA, and with the clubs and organizations forming the backbone of the University’s community, the Gardin + Evans Administration has engaged with students in the following ways:

• Working with Directors of Marketing and Communication Rosa and McRee to facilitate student giveaways using the SGA Instagram.
• Distributed tailgating passes so students can build a sense of community by tailgating together on football game days.
• Hosted a Coffee Shop Talk with President Gardin and Vice President Evans so students feel their voices are heard by the administration.
• Using social media to virtually engage with students and keep them informed on SGA’s work.
  o Raised account by ~400 followers (surpassing 2,000 at the end of 2021).
• Acquired a TV for the SGA office to use during meetings, allowing for efficient communication when sharing documents or other relevant content, and for team building activities.
• Building a strong Cabinet-Senate foundation by approving the budget and the Cabinet nominees in the first meeting of the semester.
• Communicating with Athletics to address student issues and conduct at football games.
• Developing an Open Door Policy so students both within and outside of SGA can communicate their concerns directly with leadership.
• Cultivated the relationship between SGA and pre-existing organizations by supporting their work, as shown through SGA’s support of App Ambassadors’ food drive and App Builds a Home.
• Cultivated the relationship between SGA and APP PD by co-hosting the App Kids’ Drive and the Campus Safety Walk.
• Supported the well-being of the University’s campus by coordinating campus clean-ups.

**Chief of Staff Devyn Reilly**

**Pillar: Accountability**

Aware that elected and appointed officials with SGA must be held accountable to their constituents and among themselves, Chief of Staff Devyn Reilly has done the following: mandated six to seven hours spent in the SGA Office per week to ensure Cabinet members are
working on initiatives benefiting the student body, created a weekly Cabinet Report Form to check-in on strategic plans, and scheduled mandatory Cabinet meetings every Sunday starting at 7 pm so Cabinet members can listen and support each other’s initiatives.

To increase transparency within Cabinet itself, the Chief of Staff has created an Anonymous Culture Report Form in which Cabinet members can anonymously express their thoughts and concerns about Cabinet’s culture. To increase the transparency between Senate and Cabinet, the Chief of Staff attends advisory meetings, updates each branch on the occurrences of the other, and requires Cabinet members to attend at least three out of four Senate meetings each month; the opportunity to sit in on Senate meetings combined with mandatory office hours has helped cultivate an inviting culture and newfound sense of community between the two branches.

Pillar: Wellness

Keeping the holistic wellbeing of students in mind, the Chief of Staff has met with Appalachian State University Chief of Staff Hank Foreman to discuss COVID-19’s continuous impact on the student body as well as the mental health and wellness resources available to faculty, staff, and students on campus. Chief of Staff Reilly looks forward to continuing these conversations and exploring the possibility of collaborating with the Administration in the future.

Pillar: Engagement

The Chief of Staff assists in managing the Tailgate Lottery, a successful and popular outreach initiative among students that gives them tailgate passes on game days in the highly coveted Peacock and Greenwood lots. She also organized and coordinated numerous events with multiple people involved in each for Appalachian State University’s 2021 Homecoming week.

Director of Academic Affairs Thomas McNeil

Pillar: Accountability

Director McNeil is working to increase students’ accessibility to the administration by becoming a member of various task forces on campus, which has enabled him to develop insight into the transparency (or lack thereof) between the University and its students, specifically regarding their attitudes toward academic affairs.

His memberships include that of the Scholarship Advisory Council, the General Education Council, and the General Education Revision Task Force; a group he’s been working with to implement a new Social Justice and Global Climate Literacy General Education requirement; these additional options allow students to explore the importance of awareness, advocacy, and activism specifically relating to their respective interests.
Understanding the importance of connecting with other student leaders within SGA who are bright-minded and passionate about academic affairs, Director McNeil meets weekly with the SGA Academic Affairs Committee to listen to their perspectives and work in conjunction with them to implement strategies to relieve academic affairs related challenges.

**Pillar: Wellness**

Mindful of the impact of COVID-19 on past and current semesters, Director McNeil joined the University Registration and Calendar Committee to voice the challenges students face when trying to work within the rigidity of the registration process regarding the University’s calendar. Building on this, he also joined the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee to ensure that adjustments being made to academic programs and policies are appropriate adjustments that ultimately benefit students.

**Director of Diversity and Inclusion Christian Martin**

**Pillar: Accountability**

Director Martin has tirelessly worked throughout the past semester to facilitate monthly Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and SGA round tables; here, he listens to feedback about BIPOC faculty and staff retention and holds those representing different communities within the University accountable concerning their role in the University’s commitment to a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff alike.

Continuing his work outside of these monthly meetings, Director Martin has also created the Title IX Student Advisory Board to provide students with an opportunity to discuss their concerns or suggestions regarding Title IX with the Title IX office. Aside from prompting conversations, the Board also ensures the wellbeing of students is always at the forefront of any Title IX policy changes or initiatives.

**Pillar: Equity**

To cultivate a sense of community between the different marginalized groups on campus, Director Martin holds roundtables with multicultural clubs and organizations to start conversations about whether the environment facilitated by the student body, student organizations, and other groups on campus is a supportive or safe space for students with marginalized identities; if not, discussions addressing the resources and initiatives needed to make it so are subsequently had.

Continuing his work with students, faculty, and staff who hold minority identities, Dir. Martin specifically addressed their disproportionate treatment by the police when establishing an
SGA representative on the Police Advisory Council; doing so allows their experiences to echo in a room where conversations potentially affect future policy.

Director Martin has also created the opportunity for Deputy Director Positions for Cabinet; Deputy Directors will work with the Diversity and Inclusion Director and Committee to help alleviate the workload, providing the crucial support the Director and Committee needs to validate and address the experience of marginalized groups within the High Country community and others at large, e.g. the collaboration on the Nicole Hannah-Jones Statement.

Looking Ahead to This Semester

Dir. Martin hopes to establish a Deputy Director of Campus Accessibility and Disability Services, a position specifically focused on making campus more accessible to those with disabilities. The application will be announced on SGA’s Instagram and open in January with hopes of having an appointee by the end of January 2022.

Moving forward, he also plans on continuing to strengthen the relationship between the Diversity and Inclusion Director and Committee with the Interim Chief Diversity Officer, with future collaborations already in mind.

**Director of Campus Resources Olivia Shepard**

*Pillar: Accountability*

Understanding the reality that accountability requires a partnership between faculty, staff, and students, Director Shepard has represented students on the Title IX Committee founded by the Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Christian Martin. Together, the Committee works to ensure the Title IX Office is upholding its role as a resource to those at Appalachian State University and has also begun looking into the effects and description of tenure relating to Title IX.

*Pillar: Equity*

Director Shepard is keenly aware of the importance of strengthening the University’s multicultural community through the combined support of SGA and other multicultural organizations on campus. Dir. Shepard has begun working with Jainny Estrada in Intercultural Student Affairs (ISA) to develop a marketing plan for the remainder of the 2021-22 academic year that focuses on increasing the visibility and thus the voices of these organizations and their respective students.

*Pillar: Wellness*
Director Shepard has worked to further the wellness of overall student success, which she defines as the “…mental, and physical health and general well-being of the student body.” By working alongside Dr. Howard as a member of the Student Well-Being and Advisory Board, Director Shepard has cultivated both faculty and student connections to ensure a partnership that supports students’ wellbeing.

*Pillar: Engagement*

As mentioned earlier, Director Shepard has worked with faculty members and students in organizations such as the Title IX Committee, ISA, and the Student Well-Being and Advisory Board to guarantee student voices are included in spaces in which their voices can influence the University’s policies concerning student wellbeing and representation.

*Looking Ahead to This Semester:*

Director Shepard has outlined the following plans to continue furthering her ambitions of creating a campus culture of multiculturalism through education and initiatives:

- Work with Intercultural Student Affairs (ISA) and the Latinx Hispanic Association to determine if the organization can become affiliated with the University.
- Work with ISA to improve and expand funding for multicultural organizations that may not be university-affiliated.
- Work closely with Treasurer Allen to increase funding for multicultural organizations.
- Outline a path towards the following: extending health procedures, promoting student wellness, and defining and rewarding “safe health”.
- Educate the High Country about information concerning COVID vaccines, applicable updates, accessibility on campus, updating vaccine statuses, and addressing questions and concerns from students and student leaders regarding stigmas and misinformation; she also plans on submitting information regarding these events to Chancellor Everts for promotion within her weekly scheduled emails.
- Creating a COVID-19 infographic with resources on and off-campus, relevant information, and one that debunks stigmas and misconceptions surrounding the pandemic and the vaccine.
Director of Sustainability Isabella King

**Pillar: Accountability**

Intent on increasing accessibility and transparency from university administration, Director King worked with representatives of ClimACT (a local climate and social justice collaborative) to plan and carry out a protest at the Board of Trustees meeting held in the Plemmons Student Union on September 24, 2021. The protest focused on raising awareness of ClimACT’s demands for greater accountability from the University regarding its commitment to implementing sustainability-oriented initiatives and policies within the University.

**Pillar: Equity**

Director King has worked to support pre-existing organizations, particularly focusing on creating discourse between the Office of Sustainability and ClimACT. Conducting ongoing meetings with Chief Sustainability Officer, Dr. Lee Ball, allowed her to assist in determining a university-based approach towards increasing awareness for existing resources and creating new ones to holistically better support both the student body and the University; coordinating meetings between both parties allowed Director King to work towards finding solutions in the face of imminent climate disaster.

Working alongside other SGA officials, Director King and her team were able to coordinate a meeting and facilitate conversations between ClimACT, the Office of Sustainability, Student Body President Gardin, and other members of the administration. She is planning on conducting more in the future to continue their progress towards an actionable plan for change.

**Pillar: Wellness**

Aware of the intersectionality between mental health and sustainability, Director King has connected with the Counseling Center with aspirations of creating a sustainability-focused mental health group for students struggling to cope with increasing alienation, stress, and despair in the face of the 6th great extinction. Aside from the support group, she also plans on exploring other potential collaborations with the Counseling Center as well as the resources available to help maintain and further develop its vital work with the student body.

**Pillar: Engagement**

Director King and the Sustainability Committee worked to aid student engagement in the App Builds a Home event (put on by the on-campus organization sharing the same name) by helping to alleviate the monetary cost of the event. Over the semester, they worked together to develop the “App Builds a Home” bill, which was passed by the SGA Senate this past semester.
(Fall 2021) and allowed SGA to purchase and donate the materials for the organization’s event on October 25, 2021.

Aware of the importance of increasing sustainability-focused literacy on campus, Director King has worked with other passionate individuals towards implementing sustainability education within classrooms across Appalachian State University’s campus. Drawing from previously passed legislation like the Climate Literacy Integration Act from spring 2020, she currently assists in the effort to raise awareness for new climate solutions classes available in 13 departments as of the next spring (2022); using a combination of hanging flyers and word of mouth, Director King and others hope to see a high turnout in these classes that highlight the value of and need for sustainability education in every field.

**Treasurer Ariela Allen**

_Pillar: Accountability_

Upon beginning their term, Treasurer Ariela Allen knew that financial literacy regarding the University’s budgeting and spending was low among the student body. To combat this and increase transparency between the University and its students, they’ve begun working on a PowerPoint presentation explaining the guidelines governing the University’s budgeting and spending, in partnership with University Budget Director John Adams; they’ve also reached out to Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance and Operations Matt Dull and began working on a club and organizational funding flowchart to clarify the funding options for student clubs and organizations.

At the beginning of their term, the Treasurer also noticed the funding request process between SGA and the faculty liaison Adriane Brooks was disorganized; to ameliorate this issue, they created an “SGA Funding Request Form” that all of SGA uses to submit funding requests to Adriane Brooks. Aside from dividing the funding into different categories (i.e asking if it’s a reimbursement, its categorization, describing the expense, and the amount requested) the request form also hyperlinks to a spreadsheet that further details each expense. Additionally, understanding the constitutionality of working with Senate Pro-Tempore Zannah Kukral to approve a funding request, the funding request form has an “Initials” section for both parties to initially approve expenses after discussing each request during their weekly meetings.

_Looking Ahead to This Semester_

As mentioned above, Treasurer Allen is working on developing a university budget presentation and a club/organizational funding flowchart to increase financial literacy among the student body. To ensure these resources are used, Treasurer Allen plans on posting both the
university budget presentation and the funding flowchart online so they’re easily accessible. They also plan on making a presentation request form for students, clubs, and organizations to fill out to request the Treasurer present either the budget presentation and/or the funding flowchart to their respective organization.

Co-Directors of Marketing and Communications Charlie Rosa and Patrick McRee

Pillar: Equity

To provide a platform for communities with marginalized voices, Co-Directors Rosa and McRee have created content that merges marginalized voices with innovative social media content, allowing them to “speak” with each “like”, “view”, and “share” they receive; a few examples of their doing so include: the LGBTQIA+ Pride Month highlights, the statement in support of Nikole Hannah-Jones, and Diversity and Inclusion’s statement condemning the words of Lieutenant Governor Robinson.

Pillar: Wellness

Holistic wellness is integral to any student’s success at Appalachian State University. Directors Rosa and McRee are developing SGA’s Instagram as another resource for students in need: combating food insecurity by posting informational content about the Appalachian Student Ambassadors’ Canned Food Drive and the Office of Sustainability (in partnership with Senator Ranes) and promoting mental health awareness by releasing a Campus Resources’ statement on Appalachian State University’s mental health crisis.

Pillar: Engagement

Regarding engagement, Co-Directors of Communication and Marketing Rosa and McRee have focused on creating a transparent line of communication between SGA and the student body since the successful Gardin + Evans Student Body President & Vice President Campaign in the Spring of 2021.

Through marketing and planning initiatives, Co-Directors Rosa and McRee have helped facilitate conversations about SGA’s work amongst the student body; before the fall semester, they created graphics promoting and spreading information about Cabinet applications and met with SGA Senate leadership to strategically plan for the upcoming 2021-22 academic year. During the Fall semester, they attended semester planning sessions with Gardin + Evans Administration leaders, created the promotional material for Welcome Week, and attended its associated events (Club Expo, Party in the Union, Black & Gold Traditions). They also
established a Marketing Request Form to ensure the important messages members of SGA want to share with students are posted with professionalism and timeliness.

Co-Directors Rosa and McRee have established SGA’s Instagram as both a personable and informative resource for students. During the first week of classes, the student body “met” various SGA members through spotlights and Instagram takeovers, promoting community between the organization and its constituency, as members of the student body learned more about the diverse identities members of SGA hold. Appealing to student interests, students were able to enter in a highly coveted tailgate pass giveaway that cumulatively increased engagement to over 1,100 interactions with the posts.

Concerning SGA’s Instagram as an informative resource for students, Co-Directors Rosa and McRee have specifically worked with SGA Senators to create content, sharing their enthusiasm for their role as Senators through posts about the Senate Retreat and their Halloween meeting. Their passion for serving our student body shines through posts about campus clean-up events (both within and outside the office) and last semester’s Open Mic Night held in the Plemmons Student Union Solarium. Together, their personalized yet informative approach has resulted in a growing following on social media and thus increased the visibility of SGA on campus.

Looking Ahead to This Semester

Moving forward, Co-Directors Rosa and McRee are planning on increasing SGA’s public presence on campus by expanding its visibility to the student body through SGA apparel and merchandise and cultivating a broader community by partnering with other offices, on-campus organizations, and reaching out to other parts of the community.

Director of Public Relations Olivia Jones

Pillar: Engagement

Regarding engagement, Director Jones has focused on addressing it by both working within SGA to promote dialogue amongst its members and working with other student organizations to amplify the voices both within SGA and outside it. Working within SGA, Director Jones has sat in on various committee and statement writing meetings, increasing her exposure to the innovative perspectives of its members. In doing so, she was able to incorporate their voices into the drafts for multiple personal, committee, and SGA-wide statements and initiatives.
Working outside of SGA, Director Jones understands the importance of partnering with other student organizations and its role in building a community of student leaders; thus, she worked with a reporter from *The Appalachian* to put together a feature story on the Gardin + Evans administration’s Cabinet members (September 2021). Finally, Director Jones has increased the accessibility of her position to others by implementing a Statement Request Form as a resource for those looking to work with her on any statements.
SGA Senate Report

*Note: the accomplishments of the SGA Senate have been summarized into bullet points to provide the reader with a concise, yet detailed explanation of their accomplishments*

As a whole, the Senate has accomplished the following:

- Passed 16 resolutions and 4 bills (as of November 2021) to further the interests of the student body, which will be described in more detail below. Additionally, numerous Senators are looking forward to pursuing many new initiatives this Spring.
- Held a successful Senate Retreat to provide resources for senators regarding creating legislation and connecting with their constituents.
- Held multiple “campus clean-up days” to cultivate a healthy campus for students, faculty, and staff to interact with.

Senate Reports by Committee

*Note: Each Senate Committee has taken steps to embrace the ideals of this administration’s four pillars of accountability, equity, wellness, and engagement; their efforts and accomplishments are summarized here as reported by Committee chairs to showcase their dedication and hard work regarding supporting the student body.*

The next portion of this report focuses specifically on the efforts of Senate Leadership and their committees. These hard-working individuals have helped recreate the culture of SGA by working alongside Cabinet members to create a healthy and productive relationship between the executive and legislative branches of this organization.

The Sustainable Development Committee

Pillar: Engagement

The Sustainable Development Committee worked to engage students with bettering their surrounding community by passing the Birdhouse Materials Donation Act (SB 055-003), which allotted funds from SGA for the purchase and donation of construction materials for App Builds a Home’s birdhouse construction fundraiser. This bill enabled students to support pre-existing organizations and encourage student engagement both within SGA and between SGA and other organizations.

Pillar: Wellness
The Sustainability Committee has begun working on a bill that would require all suite-style dorms to have toiletries available on hand for student residents. This bill encourages the University to support students who may be financially struggling, and in turn, advocates for wellness by alleviating some mental stress from residents who are unable to financially support their physical needs.

Looking Forward to This Semester

The Sustainability Committee plans to address the following:

- Create legislation that works to address and potentially ease AppalCart staff shortages as well as low university staff pay.
- Increase the REI semesterly budget to further student wellness on campus.
- Host an App Builds a Home interest event to engage members of SGA and the student body, along with other organizations in the High Country community.
- Develop inter-organizational accountability by passing legislation requiring student conduct board members to be approved by SGA.

The Campus Resources Committee

Pillar: Accountability

At the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester, the Campus Resources Committee drafted and passed bylaws that allow the committee to function and make meaningful changes within the parameters of the ASU-SGA Constitution. During this time, they also conducted a legislative workshop and training for new Senators to equip them with the knowledge and tools needed to be as effective as possible in their new roles. The Campus Resources Committee also hopes to address issues like the lack of transportation, lack of student parking, high rent prices for off-campus student housing, raising the university minimum wage, and others as they arise.

Pillar: Wellness

The Campus Resources Committee has begun working on a major mental health initiative focused on informing students about mental health resources available to them both on and off-campus. They are focused on educating faculty and staff about mental health awareness and encouraging leniency when it comes to students’ struggles with mental health issues. In the future, the Committee hopes to address issues in dining hall facilities like long lines, the lack of healthy options, and insufficient hours. Committee members are also working on initiatives regarding Covid-19 and mask-related legislation to keep the High Country community safe as well as legislation to increase accessibility for bikers in Boone.
The Academic Affairs Committee

Pillar: Accountability

The Academic Affairs Committee has worked to increase inter-organizational accountability by rewriting bylaws to adjust them to the new constitution, ensuring there are no discrepancies between the older constitution and bylaws and its newer counterparts. The Committee has also chosen to internally select their positions, ensuring students who are most familiar and prepared are chosen to serve on the Committee.

Pillar: Wellness

To decrease the academic turmoil students face when missing classes for mental and physical health-related reasons, the Academic Affairs Committee has written Zoom option legislation called The COVID-19 Mitigation Act (SB 055-009) to provide some relief for this problem. This bill was passed by the ASU-SGA Senate in late Fall 2021 and has been discussed with Provost Dr. Heather Norris and Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education Dr. Mark Ginn. By engaging in productive conversations with the Provost the committee hopes the strategy they’ve devised will create a viable solution for this issue. In the meantime, the committee and Director McNeil are working with members of the Faculty Senate Student Welfare Committee to develop a compromise that provides needed aid for students.

Pillar: Engagement

Ensuring its members are engaged with the communities it seeks to support, members of the Academic Affairs Committee have attended Faculty Senate meetings as well as the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee (AP&P) to promote student voices in these spaces; the Committee’s engagement in these spaces also prompts conversations in which both students and faculty acknowledge each other’s struggles and work together to develop insightful policies that best support them.

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Pillar: Equity

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee has worked towards increasing equity on campus through legislation and statements that amplify the voices both within and outside of SGA. Over the Fall 2021 semester, the Committee has devised an ASG Title IX Data Support bill and released a statement condemning Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson’s offensive comments
about the LGBTQIA+ community; both work towards instilling the importance of a safe, affirming culture on the University’s campus.

The Committee has also worked to amplify the marginalized voices of the student body’s LGBTQIA+ community by collecting testimonials regarding the NC Board of Governors’ policy—which dictates campus housing assignments be based on sex—in order to gauge interest in potentially creating legislation to support their findings at the Association of Student Governments (ASG) level.

**Pillar: Engagement**

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee encouraged students to share their concerns about the University by holding an “Open Mic Night” during the Fall semester in which students could voice their concerns directly to SGA representatives, who in turn listened to their feedback and are working to incorporate their voices into SGA’s work moving forward.

**Looking Forward to This Semester:**

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is planning on developing the following initiatives this semester:

- Putting more blue lights on campus to increase student safety in emergency situations.
- Strengthening the relationship between SGA and the Office of Disability Resources to better support students with disabilities.
- Adding more gender-neutral restrooms on campus to create safe spaces for students with different gender identities.
- Having more cultural foods in the dining halls to build a sense of home for minority communities and to diversify the menu options.
- Require implicit bias training to make students, faculty, and staff aware of how their implicit biases impact both themselves and others.
- Add menstrual accessibility in men’s bathrooms and the Union for students to provide free supplies for menstruating students.
- Regarding the Appalachian Police Department and the Boone Police Department, the Committee is currently researching both before collecting the data and deciding how best to address their findings moving forward.
The Rules Committee

*Pillar: Accountability*

Over the Fall 2021 semester, the Rules Committee has held the ASU-SGA accountable for its actions and proposed initiatives by reviewing almost every item of legislation to pass through the ASU-SGA in this session. In the creation of General Statutes for the ASU-SGA as a whole, the committee will be progressively improving and providing statutory guidance for the organization in years to come. Their contributions include: processing every appointment to the executive’s Cabinet within one week of assembling; providing detailed recommendations to the Senate with regards to almost every item of legislation; as well as hosting a legislative workshop to advance the correct development of legislation within ASU-SGA.