

*March 6, 2020*

## **CSA Executive Annual Report**



Dear Carls,

It is with great pleasure that I write this CSA Executive Annual Report on behalf of the CSA Executive team and the entire Student Government. I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished over the past year in service of the student body. I am also equally proud of what we have learned as a team of student representatives who strive for excellence and the betterment of this institution.

Since last spring, we have been working diligently to deliver on our campaign promise to #makeCarletonhome. Our efforts have been divided between strengthening CSA's organizational infrastructure and effectiveness, and tackling long-standing student concerns. This report will, therefore, highlight some of the big initiatives we have implemented in these two priority areas.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of an effective student government. We believe that, CSA, at its best, should be capable of leveraging its resources and influence on campus to make a reckonable impact on the day-to-day lives of Carleton students. As a result, we have spent considerable time streamlining our internal processes and functions.

Specifically, we have revamped our CSA working groups; implemented a Senate Reporting System to foster accountability and improve our institutional memory; decentralized several Executive responsibilities to prevent burnout and encourage more student participation; comprehensively reviewed our governing structure and documents (i.e., CSA Constitution and Bylaws); updated the CSA Financial Guidelines to be more clear and accessible; created a CSA Senator Handbook for new representatives; improved our student engagement efforts on social media; and leveraged our mailing system to solicit more student input and feedback via campus-wide surveys.

Additionally, we have institutionalized our efforts to be more transparent and accountable. Our new governing documents now mandate the CSA Senate to respond to student inquiries in a timely fashion; broadcast weekly Senate meetings on the CSA website; and produce regular reports on CSA legislation, initiatives, and priorities.

We are deeply grateful to former CSA Treasurer John Mullan '20, who has been working closely with our Senate Reforms working group to improve the Reporting System. We are also grateful for the valuable contributions of Natalie Sainz '20, Eve Hadjiyanis '23, Abby Hartzell '20, Senators Katie Rose Parsons '20, Hibo Abdi '20, Molly Zuckerman '22, and Brittany Dominguez '21 to our constitutional review process.

Besides our inward-facing work, we have also implemented a number of outward-facing projects to enhance all aspects of student life at Carleton. Through our Student Projects Committee (SPC), we have funded pilot projects for reusable Klean Kanteen thermoses; reusable to-go containers; seasonal tree lights; and free menstrual hygiene products. In this report, I will highlight only one of these projects.

Earlier this term, CSA surveyed students about their use of and access to menstrual hygiene products. The preliminary data showed that (i) the purchase of menstrual hygiene products pose a financial burden for approximately 17 percent of Carleton students, and (ii) that there is significant interest in an increase in the availability of menstrual hygiene products on campus.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, our Senators, Molly Zuckerman '22, Brittany Dominguez '21, Andrew Farias '21, and Binny Onabolu '23, teamed up with Emma Leither '20 from the Sustainability Office to pilot an initiative making menstrual products more accessible and sustainable on campus. With funding from the SPC, they purchased 90 menstrual cups, which will be distributed for free at the beginning of spring term.

The group is now in conversation with the College about a program providing free, sustainable, and high-quality menstrual products, funded by the administration.<sup>2</sup> We wholeheartedly support this initiative because it would ensure that the cost of these essential products is not a financial burden, especially to low-income and first-generation students. It would also allow the College to reaffirm its

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<sup>1</sup> 592 students responded to the survey. We realize that certain sampling biases may be present in the results of the (voluntary) survey.

<sup>2</sup> Brown made headlines in 2016 when it implemented such a program:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/09/09/free-tampons-for-all-at-brown-university-this-school-year-even-in-the-mens-room/>

commitment to shaping social progress by recognizing that equal access to menstrual products should be a right, not a privilege.

As many low-income and first-generation students can attest, textbooks induce a significant cost that is not covered by the standard financial aid package. Over the past three terms, we have helped defray such costs through our CSA Textbook Library, which currently has 3,000 textbooks. Our Senators, Andrew Farias '21 and Brittany Dominguez '21, have been reorganizing and re-cataloging the library to improve accessibility for students who utilize the space.

CSA has also collaborated with Student Financial Services to disburse more than \$25,000 in CSA Scholarships to help cover the rising cost of the Student Activity Fee. Additionally, we have collaborated (i) with Dean Livingston's office to make laundry free on campus; (ii) with the Library to provide 'free' digital access to the *New York Times*; (iii) with the Career Center to host financial literacy seminars; and (iv) with the Human Resources department to host life-skills (e.g. job benefits/insurance) seminars. We are proud to have worked with all these different stakeholders on campus to improve the student life experience. We are also proud of Senators Cole Dilanni '21 and Luke Norquist '21, who have been instrumental in these collaboration efforts.

Supporting student interests, activities, and initiatives remains our top priority. Under the responsible stewardship of Vice President Hibo Abdi '20 and Treasurer Brandon Moy '20, we have allocated more than \$700,000 to hundreds of student organizations, tournaments, conferences, activities, and events (e.g. Lunar New Year, Afriacn and Caribbean Students Association Celebration, Spring Concert, MOSAIC's South Asia Night). I am glad to report that our spending has been right on track this year with 34.8 percent of our Special Allocations budget remaining for the last third of the year.

I am also glad to report that our CSA Governance Committee, under the able leadership of Senator Sid Hirshberg '21, has chartered more than 10 new organizations, including the Brew Club, Triathlon, Democracy Matters, and Off the Cuff. CSA is always happy to help students create spaces that allow them to try new things, make new friends, and take their passions to the next level.

We have continued to play an active role in shaping College policy and other decisions pertaining to student life. This past year, we have appointed more than 25 students to college advisory committees, such as the Environmental Advisory Committee and the Student Life Advisory Committee. Having students on such committees is vital for fostering good governance, transparency, and accountability. I would be remiss if I did not thank President Poskanzer and Dean Livingston for supporting our cause to have a permanent liaison to the Student Life Committee (SLC) of the Board of Trustees. Last term, the Board approved a resolution to make the CSA President a non-voting permanent liaison to the SLC, successfully concluding a two-year trial run. Representing students on the SLC has been an honor. I have tried my best to keep the trustees apprised of student ideas, opinions, and concerns.

Over the past year, we have also attempted to shape College policy through resolutions and statements. For instance, we have passed resolutions calling on the College to (i) look into Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) investing and (ii) add gender pronouns to the Campus Directory. Senators Luke Norquist '21, Ozzy Cota '22, and Molly Zuckerman '22 have done an outstanding job in authoring such resolutions in collaboration with students, such as Evie Kortanek '22.

In efforts to build relationships beyond our Carleton confines, we have also passed a resolution in support of passenger rail funding in Northfield. This resolution was sponsored by Suzie Nakasian, the Northfield Ward 1 representative on the Northfield City Council. CSA Executives have also met with

Congresswoman Angie Craig to discuss higher education issues that could potentially inform her work on the Higher Education Reauthorization Act.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that we have invited a number of offices and administrators to speak on matters of student interest or give updates on College policies, priorities, and initiatives. For instance, we have invited President Poskanzer; Dean Livingston; Fred Rogers, Vice President and Treasurer; Nora Peterson, Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator; Janet Lewis-Muth, Director of Health Promotion; and Martha Larson, Manager of Campus Energy and Sustainability. We are grateful for the constructive and thoughtful discussions we have had with these folks.

This report is, of course, not meant to be an exhaustive account of everything we have accomplished or everyone we have collaborated with over the past year. Rather, it is meant to show that CSA is committed to clear communication, transparency, and accountability. It is also meant to demonstrate that effecting change on campus is a collaborative effort. We have no doubt that the incoming CSA administration--President Andrew Faris '21, Vice President Brittany Dominguez '21, and Treasurer Polycarpe Bagereka '22--will continue to leverage the creativity, grit, and principled judgement of Carleton students, CSA representatives, student club leaders, and administrators to make things happen on campus.

We also believe that they will be able to address the key challenges that CSA continues to face. For instance, CSA--not unlike other student governments across the country--still struggles with fully engaging the student body. This is illustrated by the lower voter turnout in the recent CSA election: only 49.7 percent of students voted, a 4.3 percent drop from last year. In fact, turnout rates have been declining in recent years: in 2017, turnout was a record 67 percent, followed by 65 percent in 2018,

and 54 percent in 2019. This means that the new administration needs to find more creative ways of engaging the student population. CSA cannot create long-lasting *organic* change on campus without student perspectives informing its decision-making process or determining its priorities.

As our term comes to a close, we invite you to join CSA in creating the Carleton you want. We also thank you for electing us as your CSA Executives for the 2019-2020 academic year. It has been our pleasure to serve. We are immensely proud of all CSA has accomplished under our leadership. We are also grateful for the (College) administration's willingness to build a positive working relationship and to take our concerns and ideas seriously.

On behalf of the CSA Executive team and the entire Carleton Student Government,

Anesu Masakura '20

CSA President