

SGA holds election for upcoming year

By Victoria Cruz
News Writer

The Student Government Association is kicking off preparations for the 2026-27 academic year with the launch of another class election. This cycle saw many exciting candidates and opportunities for students.

Each election creates an opportunity for students to serve as the voice to undergraduate students and implement change.

“Students should be interested in SGA because it’s a place where voices can be heard directly from a students perspective,” business information systems major Catalina Espinosa, a junior, said.

The current election cycle had 14 representative-at-large positions and 18 candidates in the running. Voting concluded on April 22. Results will be announced at the first body meeting in the fall semester on August 27.

A new chapter is set to begin at the first meeting, as all incoming members will be sworn in and eligible to vote immediately.

Following the swearing in of new members, the



Members of the Student Government Association in Room 215 of the Adanti Student Center.

new SGA president will be elected through an internal vote of all seated members.

All candidates are eligible to campaign during a set time period while abiding by the Student Code of Conduct. Campaign budget is limited to \$200 and promotional materials can be shared only in designated locations.

Political science major William Moroz, a senior and the current president of SGA, detailed future initiatives that he believes the next cabinet could explore.

The first topic of discussion was student attendance policies.

Moroz said that students should be graded based on how they engage with the material, not on

their physical presence.

“If a student can demonstrate mastery of the material without attending every class, that raises important questions about how we define performance and accountability,” Moroz said.

He also encouraged future representatives to continue the Community Hour initiative that he

started this year.

“This was a major focus this past year, and its long-term success will depend on continued attention and follow-through,” Moroz said.

Finally, Moroz said he believes that the future SGA should work to maintain the work of the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Moroz said this

initiative is important, as 58% of the university population identifies as people of color.

As Moroz prepares for his next chapter, he shared some parting words of wisdom with the incoming representatives and the student body.

“Use your voice. It carries more weight than you may realize. Attend SGA meetings, get involved and take advantage of the opportunities around you. Your undergraduate experience moves quickly,” Moroz said.

When reflecting about accomplishments during his term, Moroz stressed that every success they achieved was the result of a collective effort.

“I am proud of the spaces we have entered, the questions we have raised, and the advocacy we have carried forward as an organization. I am confident in where this organization is headed,” Moroz said.

As election results are announced and the new SGA steps up, they look to uphold the standard for success set by their predecessors while consistently encouraging the student body to explore ways they can get involved.

PHOTO | SGA OWL CONNECT

News writer shares her study abroad experience in Toyko



International business major Victoria Cruz, a senior and news writer, standing in front of Mount Fuji on Dec. 1, 2025.

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In the fall semester of 2026, I had the opportunity to study abroad at one of the university’s partner institutions, Tokyo International University.

I learned so much from this experience that it can be hard to limit to 500 words, but I want to share a few lessons that I will carry with me.

Throughout my life, the idea of studying abroad felt unattainable in a lot of ways. Yet this campus has made studying abroad accessible.

There are many scholarship opportunities for students who want to study abroad because being a global citizen benefits the international and local community.

I paid the same tuition I pay to the university, and my aid still applied on top of additional funding I received as a student.

In the end, I spent about the same amount as I would have as a full-time student.

Studying abroad is absolutely a privilege, one I would never take for granted.

But I find that many students are unaware of how many resources

exist to make that dream a reality.

Studying abroad has changed everything about the way that I live my life. I remember before I left, I was absolutely terrified. I had been abroad before, but this was by far the longest I had ever spent away from my support system.

I struggled to find my footing and navigate my loneliness, but every day it got easier.

I found my favorite places, I established routines, and I made a community for myself. I built myself a life from scratch, to the point where many locals knew me as a familiar face.

All of the obstacles I faced forced me to take a look at what I value the most. That level of introspection was difficult to manage, but it made me realize who I am as a person.

Learning what I needed, what I liked and what my core beliefs are helped me to realize who I need to be to live a full life.

Being the strongest and most independent version of myself pushed me to develop myself in ways that are actively making my life better now that I am back on campus.

My openness to the world, experiences and other people has made my life richer.

Sometimes, I wonder if I made the right decision. I missed a lot here at home: birthdays, celebrations, holidays. Those days were always the hardest.

My appreciation for life and my desire to take risks is fueled by the knowledge that I am capable of more than I thought.

I knew the transition to Japan would be hard, but one thing I never anticipated was the culture shock of coming back.

My life here is one that I have always known and cherished. But the person I left as was not the person who came back.

Rediscovering who I am stateside has been an adventure in itself. Studying abroad can provide students with a sense of agency to create meaning in their own life.

I highly encourage anybody who is interested in international opportunities to contact the Office of International Education.

The staff is well equipped to assist any student through the process, including study abroad options and funding.

Guiding eyes puppy walk

Victoria Cruz
News Writer

On April 21, Guiding Eyes Puppy Raising hosted the Pack Walk to help students, raisers and the dogs de-stress before finals season.

The sunset walk stretched 1.5 miles around the university campus with seven dogs that are currently being trained by students.

“It really is that time of year where people need to just take a second to themselves, even when they don’t think they need it. So, getting some fresh air and seeing some dogs and saying hi is always a good thing,” English major Ella Bernegger, a senior, said.

As president and founder, Bernegger introduced the program to the university community as a way to honor her own connection to the program.

Her mother was a narcotics handler whose canine partner was a release from Guiding Eyes.

In just two years, the program has expanded from one dog to seven.

“When you start a program like this, you have no idea what’s going to happen and if people are actually going to take to it or not. But, I mean, the numbers don’t lie,” Bernegger said.

The event highlighted how community-oriented the Guiding Eyes program is. Chemistry major Monserrat Martinez-Garcia, a senior and puppy raiser, is one of many students who have had the opportunity to contribute to the program.

“It really is a nice program. It has lots of benefits for you. For me, it makes me feel great that I at least am doing something that will benefit someone in the future,” Martinez-Garcia said.

The community surrounding Guiding Eyes is one both students and raisers benefit from.

“It’s like I gained a whole community in and outside of the school. You’re never alone when it comes to this program. There’s always someone or even



K9 Jules lying in front of Buley Library after the Pack Walk on April 21.



Guiding Eyes Puppy Raising trainers standing with their puppies on Buley Library Patio.

something that’s going on that maybe someone else has experienced it too,” Martinez-Garcia said.

Martinez-Garcia highlighted that the event and the various other programming hosted by the organization aims to not only connect the community but also raise awareness.

“It’s important to give people an understanding of what this program is and make it more approachable because not a lot of people know about this program,” Martinez-Garcia said.

The event brought people together to celebrate the success of the program.

“It’s just incredible to see this many people get involved and to watch them grow as raisers

and as young adults,” Bernegger said.

Bernegger encourages any students who may be interested in the program to reach out and learn more about what opportunities may be available to them.

“If anyone’s interested, the doors don’t close after day one. We’re always looking to talk to new people,” Bernegger said.

Guiding Eyes will finish out the year with two events. On Monday, May 5, they will host Paws and Paints Night in Adanti Student Center Room 217 as a creative way to interact with dogs and raisers.

Students can also attend an ice cream social on May 6 in the Academic Quad to finish the year in celebration.

PHOTOS | VICTORIA CRUZ