

New senate leaders push for transparency, communication

Annika Brown, Mark Young assume roles as President, Vice President of the student body

Kylee Tackett
kylee.tackett@valpo.edu

On April 16, elections were held for Student Senate President and Vice President. Annika Brown was elected as President with Mark Young elected as Vice President. Together, they will serve as President and Vice President for the 2019-20 school year.

Brown, an international relations and french double major, has been apart of Senate since her freshman year. She started out as a Freshman Senator while also working with Senate's screening committee. The following year she was an At-large Senator as well as the Chair for the Committee on Media. Last semester she served as a Junior Senator. Currently, Brown is abroad which is why she is not involved with Senate this semester.

Young, a data science major and business administration minor, has also been apart of Senate since he was a freshman. He served as a Freshman Senator for the first semester of his freshman year. His second semester, he served on the ex-

ecutive board as the Public Relations Chair until the end of his sophomore year. Last semester he went abroad, rejoining this semester as an aide on the Student Senate Guidebook.

The Student Senate Guidebook was an idea suggested by Brown last semester. It will serve as a guide for students and organizations to help clarify the bylaws and how to submit documents such as budgets.

Brown is very passionate about Senate and it's functions, which is why she chose to run for Student Senate President.

"After being in Senate for two and a half years, I really felt that I had developed the skills and a really solid knowledge of how Student Senate runs to have some ideas on things that I wanted to improve about the way that Senate functions. Especially its relations to the student body," Brown said.

Originally, Young was also going to run for Student Senate President but after Brown, one of his close friends through Senate, informed him of her running, he changed his mind.

"To me, I'd rather work with her because she's great at what she does and I think that we will

be an awesome team. I'd rather work with her than run against her," Young said. "I was happy to run for Vice President because that was also an interest of mine. I just wanted to be in a position where I could make sure that things that needed to happen are happening."

From the time that Brown announced that she was running for President, Young knew that he wanted to campaign alongside Brown.

"From the moment she told me, I knew I was running with Annika [Brown] as her vice," Young said.

Since Brown is currently studying abroad, she will be relying a lot on Young to inform her of issues on campus from this semester that need attention during their term. One thing that Brown does want to focus on and fix during her time as President is communication between Student Senate and the student body.

"Making sure they know what Student Senate does outside of budgeting because that's how it is normally recognized," Brown said. "For me, it is wanting to change that and wanting Student Senate to be more the

center of student issues on campus and really creating a space for more students to share what their experiences at Valpo are and get issues on campus addressed more quickly."

Young is also interested in helping enhance communication between Student Senate and the student body. He believes that the Student Senate Guidebook will help resolve most of these issues. Young is also interested in fixing some concerns that students have expressed to him.

"This student brought up to me that there is still no male, female in the same dorm room after a certain time. They were talking to me about how they were being preached all that Valpo inclusivity and at that same time its 'nope you can't do this,'" Young said. "It's a difficult problem to tackle from an administration viewpoint but we will see what we can do about it."

While Brown and Young have both been involved in Student Senate for their whole time at Valpo, there are many new faces that will be joining next semester.

"It's [also] really exciting,

we're going to have lots of new Senators coming in in the fall and so a lot of that is also really making sure that anyone who is new to Student Senate understands everything right away," Brown said.

Young believes that this new set of students in Student Senate helps Valpo's vision of being more inclusive.

"I am very happy with how the recent Senator elections happened. We had a lot of people running that were from their college, or year, or commuters or transfers that showed interested that haven't before," Young said. "I think we are going to have a diverse, in my opinion, next year... In the past years it definitely hasn't been as diverse as it should."

As for next year, there are still a few open seats on Senate that need to be filled for the fall.

"I encourage anyone that is still considering wanting to join Senate to give it a try and see if there is a position that they're eligible for or interested in and apply for it come fall semester because we definitely want our Senate to be full right away so we can have a strong start to the year," Brown said.



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