President

Candidate: Arielle Silva

Candidate Statement:

I am because you are, you are because I am. We are rooted in community; together and empowered, we are heard.

I’m Arielle Silva and I’m re-running to be your University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) Student Union Assembly (SUA) President. Throughout this academic year, I’ve had the privilege of serving as SUA President alongside fulfilling other leadership roles such as Black Student Union (BSU) Co-Chair, Black Lives Matter (BLM) Garden Co-Steward, and Student Alliance of Native American & Indigenous People (SANAI) Core Member until Spring Quarter of 2024. During which, I’ve collaborated, protested, grieved, and expanded the fight with resolute student-leaders this year. Our voices, minds, and hearts are our greatest tools, and I’ve cherished using them collectively to propel us toward change.

To affect a lasting culture shift, the SUA must embody a commitment to believing in a multiplicity of approaches and actively bringing our people along in the work. Last year, my decision to pursue this role was driven by the belief that our community deserves leadership that honors the experiences of those who have cultivated practices for healing. Approaching the final stretch of my tenure, I’ve observed the natural turnover of student-leaders — weakening our collective resistance, wisdom, and histories. Administration exploits this turnover, banking on the disruption of continuity in activism. I’m seeking re-election to resist the fading of our rich legacy of student advocacy. I am the candidate equipped with the knowledge to sustain the momentum we’ve built, recognizing that my strength comes from our interconnectedness in the struggle.

I am because you are, you are because I am.

One of the first lessons I learned about SUA is that it wasn't a space that exhibited a relational culture. Previously the space upheld values centered on individualistic goals and objectives that caused disbursement and seclusion of certain leaders within the SUA. In order to disrupt that culture I recognized that the SUA needed a good level of agitation and a definite amount of grace. By utilizing and understanding that our discomfort is at the root of all growth, myself and the SUA assembly were able to reshape and radically enact what it means to become a committed leader in the service of social justice.

We are rooted in community together and empowered, we are heard.
I've had the privilege of witnessing the power of students and the utilization of their agency to mobilize and demand an improvement in Transportation and Parking Services (TAPS). The student-initiated TAPS Town Hall, organized and facilitated by the SUA officers, demonstrated the power of students becoming a part of something bigger than themselves. Movement work requires the kind of commitment that is forged in a praxis of ideas and collective action. Resisting the false understanding that higher education isn’t a space for disruption and institutional critiques are fundamental to OUR existence. Through student activism and collectivity, there is hope. We must fight to win while sparking radical institutional change against the systemic marginalization of student voices, together.

**Vice President of Internal Affairs**

**Candidate: Nareh Hamo**

**Candidacy Statement:**

Hello! My name is Nareh Hamo and I’m a second year Legal Studies major at Santa Cruz. My candidacy for SUA Vice President of Internal Affairs is founded on my passion for student agency and experience with internal affairs on campus. More importantly, my decision to run springs from my ability to understand and address the current challenges IVP faces. As SCOC representative for Cowell Senate, I have witnessed the role of IVP in leading SCOC, and how the various community members and leaders on campus felt neglected when that role was absent. Furthermore, the absence of IVP evaluations creates a lack of accountability for SUA and in turn a lack of transparency with students. To put it simply: the role of IVP is demanding and complex – which is why this position needs to be filled with care and consideration to ensure that future IVP operations are seen through. Therefore, I am running for IVP because I am committed to restoring trust within our campus community towards SUA, revitalizing the role and all its counterparts, and creating an environment of transparent action and dialogue that makes students and faculty feel heard.

Coming from multiple spaces on campus such as ASA, Cowell Senate, SCOC, Lobby Corps, SUGB, Book Club, and FPC – I bring a representative and diverse SWANA voice to the table. Additionally, my widespread experience in the management of organizations, marketing internships, and various campaigns makes me confident in my ability to organize internal campaigns with the IVP position. With timely announcements, coordination, and planning I hope to provide a transparent and seamless framework surrounding the internal affairs of the school. Along with having the time commitment to attend weekly SUA meetings, operate IVP office
hours/meetings, and create monthly reports – I recognize the importance of utilizing my role as the leading resource on all issues affecting the student body to amplify students' voices. Especially in times where housing and transportation services are unresponsive to students' needs – it is important to make sure that communities have the internal support needed to address concerns and navigate mobilization efforts. Implementing forums and time allotments where boards can openly discuss, collaborate, and advocate for shared efforts is crucial. I am prepared to coordinate student participation across campus-wide committees, boards, and task forces – ensuring that the gaps within the intertwined relationship of academic and administrative allocations are addressed.

Now more than ever, UCSC needs leadership that understands how to recognize internal failures and be committed to resolving them. I am here on behalf of students, by the will of the students, asking for an opportunity to create a wave of stability and change that cannot be ignored. I am because you are, you are because I am. We are rooted in community; together and empowered, we are heard. With my firsthand experience and support from the current SCOC Committee, I ask that you humbly consider me for SUA Vice President of Internal Affairs.

Vice President of External Affairs

Candidate: Andres Martinez-Sabino

Candidate Statement:

Hello, I'm Andres Martinez-Sabino, and I am re-running to be your Vice President of External Affairs. I'm a second-year double major in Legal Studies and Environmental Studies with a minor in Philosophy. I have dedicated this year to reimagining campus events, conferences, and priorities of the EVP Office to address our campus issues, pushing and redefining student advocacy. I define success by models that focus on collective voice and belonging as central components for change.

My qualifications lie in the achievements achieved this year:

• Initiated projects targeting transportation and housing issues, creating avenues for student input and administration collaboration

• Facilitated the SUA TAPS Town Hall with fellow SUA officers, opening the floor to address student grievances regarding hazardous transportation services, predatory ticketing practices, and the demand for increased transparency
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• Presented the UCSC housing crisis directly to the UC Regents Board Members, bolstering strong backing from the UC Student Regents and their respective campuses

• Coordinated over 25+ student lobbying sessions at both state and federal levels across 4 pivotal conferences, ensuring equitable access to student travel and off-campus learning experiences

• Empowered a diverse cohort of 130+ students to advocate effectively within our campus community, guaranteeing the inclusion of various student voices

Enhanced campus-wide awareness and visibility of events and advocacy initiatives, aiming to reach students from all campus demographics

Even when I'm not directly advocating for students, my dedication to our collective voice remains unwavering. As the Chancellor's Undergraduate Internship Program (CUIP) Peer Review Board Student Coordinator, I facilitated student conduct cases using a restorative justice framework, ensuring peer-to-peer accountability. My involvement as Co-Captain and Travel Coordinator of the Mock Trial Team at UCSC demonstrates my passion for honing leadership beyond the scope of advocacy. I've come to understand the balance between the ambitious goals of the EVP role and the bureaucratic challenges of administration, which often tends to exploit the burnout and turnover of student leaders. Valuable knowledge and connections naturally leave the Student Union Assembly, weakening the collective voice and mobilization capacity of the student body. The administration maintains control by eroding institutional memory of past activism and countering the ongoing struggle for progress. If re-elected, I will align the EVP Office’s priorities with campus needs and expand advocacy on a UC-wide level. I will ensure the implementation of more workshops, training, and low-commitment opportunities, providing a consistent space for students to be empowered. The EVP Office is MEANT to move in tandem with all student led-movements, student organizations, and resource centers. We learn as we go.

I am the EVP candidate here to stay and push boundaries for our fight. I don't make empty promises; instead I persist in my efforts on your behalf. I am because you are, you are because I am. We are rooted in community; together and empowered, we are heard. Vote to elect me, and together, we'll amplify our voices and make a difference, once more. Thank you for your continued support.

Vice President of Diversity & Inclusion

Candidate: Oluwatunwumi (Wumi) Orgunlade
Candidate Statement:

I invite you to reflect: Do you feel truly seen within our university community? Is your voice being authentically represented? Do you take pride in calling UCSC your home? If, like me, your answers lean towards a resounding 'no,' then it's evident that change is not just necessary but imperative.

Hello, my name is Oluwatunwumi (Wumi) Ogunlade and I am running to be your Vice President of Diversity & Inclusion. My personal journey as a Nigerian immigrant and a Black woman has brought to light the stark reality of how our campus has often failed to uplift and support individuals like myself. Witnessing my single mother's resilience as she navigated an unknown country in pursuit of better resources will forever profoundly shape my perspective.

My experience as the chief operations manager for this year's Vice President of Student Life, Alicia Anyanwu, coupled with my active involvement as Chair of Merrill Student Government has equipped me with the skills and passion needed for this role. Additionally, being a part of Lobby Corps has allowed me to lobby on state and federal levels, where I have advocated for students' needs and will continue to do so relentlessly. Additionally, my academic pursuits reflect my deep commitment to social justice advocacy as I am double majoring in Critical Race and Ethnic Studies, alongside Legal Studies. I have dedicated my career to social justice advocacy and this dedication extends beyond titles or positions; it's a lifelong commitment that I bring to the table.

It's undeniable that systemic barriers have historically hindered people of color from fully participating in higher education. Colleges were not initially designed with the diverse needs of students of color in mind and, as a first-generation student, I intimately understand the weight of familial expectations and the unfulfilled dreams of past generations. Now, how can we expect students to thrive when systemic obstacles stand in their way? My mission is clear: I aim to dismantle these barriers and ensure equitable access to essential resources for academic success and graduation. UCSC must evolve into a space that welcomes, nurtures, and ensures a sense of belonging and safety for all. My goal is to build upon what the previous VPDI, Leslie Marquez, did with administrators and student organization partnerships.

Student turnover naturally diminishes previous struggles for change, if elected I will sustain: ● Accountability for Transportation and Parking Services (TAPS)

● Equitable Housing Policies

● Financial aid and Basic Needs accessibility

● Mental Health accessibility

● Campus Safety and zero tolerance for Hate speech

● Support for resource centers and student workers
I am because you are, you are because I am. We are rooted in community; together and empowered, we are heard. If elected, I will work tirelessly to redistribute resources equitably, hold the administration accountable to properly fund student needs, and foster a culture of community empowerment across UCSC. I stand firm in my resolve to amplify the voices of marginalized communities that have long been silenced and neglected.

Vice President of Academic Affairs

Candidate: Andrew Nate De Guzman

Candidate Statement:

Hey UC Santa Cruz fam! My name is Andrew Nate De Guzman, and I’m running to be your Vice President of Academic Affairs. Like many of you, I chose UCSC because I believed that I would obtain an exceptional, higher education. I am a second-generation, Filipino-Chinese American student, and a third-year double majoring in Education, Democracy, & Justice and Psychology. Through my studies, I’ve participated in meaningful internships and research projects. While I hope everyone has had similar fruitful experiences here, I know that this is not the reality for many.

I serve as an Aspect Coordinator for Bayanihan (formerly Filipino Student Association), the Bayanihan Representative for the SUA, a member of engaging education (e2), a Core Member of A Step Forward (a student-initiated outreach program with e2), and I work for Physical & Biological Sciences Testing, which works with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Throughout my time, I’ve conducted research on academic policy and the needs of middle and high school students. I’m passionate about the linguistic needs and accommodations for English Language Learners; because I was an ELL and in speech therapy. As I further pursue my studies in education and engage in work within the field, my understanding of academic policy and educational history has deepened. This knowledge, which I see being lived out now at UCSC, informs my advocacy.

Through my involvement in various student organizations, programs, jobs, internships, research, alongside my experience as a student of color, I have seen many instances of student struggles. Difficulties with classes, threats against safety and well-being, financial instability, and the fight to literally remain enrolled begs the question: How has our university failed to meet its students’ demands for the quality education we deserve? Administration and faculty must work with students to hear our voice. Otherwise, when students take charge of the education that’s
supposed to be provided to us, we are forced into systems with no support. As evident with the changes to the Critical Race & Ethnic Studies Department budget, pivotal peer-to-peer courses like CRES 45, CRES 70B, and CRES 70U will soon be disrupted. Administration fails to prioritize the elements crucial to our education. I refuse to accept this status quo for myself, our peers, and future students.

Many don't know that reclaiming our education cannot be quantified. Building relationships, participating in community spaces, and collaborative decision-making are required for change. As VPAA, I will ensure that the DRC receives the resources to efficiently provide academic accommodations crucial for student success. I will aim to address the funding challenges that many departments face which result in insufficient academic support. I plan to utilize the Academic Affairs Office to harness my skills, passion, and experiences, along with our collective experience to make our time at UCSC fruitful. Our decision to invest in our education at this institution should result in the prestigious degrees promised. I am because you are, you are because I am. We are rooted in community; together and empowered, we are heard.

Vice President of Student Life

Candidate: Nicolas Robles

Candidate Statement:

Hello, my name is Nicolas Robles, and I am excited to be running for your Vice President of Student Life! As a Sociology major entering my fourth year, I witnessed the declining state of our campus without just cause. When they occur, shared decision-making processes often involve trivial matters or are orchestrated by those in power, with little to no student input.

Here are the things that were once accessible, but have since changed without consulting students:

- The removal of two-year guaranteed housing in favor of the new housing lottery system
- Limited transportation options that threaten campus safety
- The inability to enjoy unlimited meal swipes a day at the dining hall, along with other issues caused by administrative decision-making

My identity as a mixed-race Latine-Chinese student has granted me insights into the challenges faced by BIPOC students. Originally from the diverse city of Los Angeles, I felt the impact of culture shock and feeling out of place when I came to Santa Cruz. Our identities shape our college experiences, highlighting the need for more inclusive spaces. As we recover from the
pandemic, creating community-centered decision-making spaces becomes crucial for fostering unity.

Serving as the UC Student Association’s Transportation Affairs Officer allowed me to work with students from all nine University of California campuses. I identified common issues through coordinated UCSA lobbying efforts, such as Latine student rights, BIPOC student support, EBT eligibility, housing reforms, and tenant rights. I advocated for retaining CalGrant funding and championed resolutions urging a ceasefire in Palestine with California State Senators. Valuing diverse ways of understanding and meaning-making is critical for finding solutions.

When working with communities different from our own, we have much to learn about their ways of being and doing. As the previous Vice President of the UCSC Student Housing Coalition, I’ve had many opportunities, including engaging in Santa Cruz City Council discussions, to support the welfare of all students, both on and off campus. I know better than anyone that real change requires moving beyond traditional norms. While traditional bureaucratic channels may be strategic in the short term, our Student Union Assembly must model a commitment to believing in a multiplicity of approaches to effect lasting change. Administration exacerbates our struggles by failing to demonstrate sympathy for their obligation to listen to students, instead deflecting responsibility onto students.

For me, titles, money, or influence are irrelevant. I have no qualms about being on the front lines for what is right, envisioning a world where everyone can exist without fear of judgment. I stand up for the marginalized, believing in celebrating everyone’s worth. I’m committed to this mission, drawing strength from sustaining previous struggles for change within the SUA. I am because you are, you are because I am. We are rooted in community; together and empowered, we are heard. If elected, progress on campus may not meet our ideal expectations, but it will be our collective space of bravery. Together, we will work towards it as a community.

Organization Representative

Student Organization: Student Housing Coalition statement by Josh Brons

Student Organization Statement:

UC Santa Cruz is special. It is not just the scenic campus upon a hill above the coastal town, but it is a renowned institution. An institution based on the values not just explicitly stated by the University of California, but rather by the students that etch that reputation into the fabric of our individual academia. As a student here I have witnessed a lot- I am the member of two different advocacy groups on campus, both the Student Housing Coalition and the College Democrats, where we fought for student representation on the Santa Cruz City Council and aided in the election efforts of several progressive candidates. My political work is based on compassion and pragmatism. I currently organize for a group called Dream for America, a Gen-Z start-up that has conducted and financed several student protests across America. It is also important to
mention my involvement as the Philanthropy Chair of Phi Alpha Delta, which is the Pre-Law Fraternity as UC Santa Cruz.

My experience begins as an Assistant Field Manager for Katie Porter in 2020. While I was there I led a team of volunteers and also advised the campaign on smaller electoral strategies. From there I bounced around on different campaigns within my locality in Orange County before eventually founding a club at my high school that revolved around debate and political issues. Once I was admitted to UC Santa Cruz I had already been working (and still am) as the Organizing Director at Dream for America, when I first arrived on campus, I joined the College Dems and later the Student Housing Coalition after learning about how badly the housing crisis had become. I hope to take a large stance on housing affordability and promotion of housing growth both on and off campus, and I hope that this position will allow me to be an effective advocate for all students.

After working with the College Dems for some time, I would eventually receive the position of Deputy Campaign Manager on the Joe Thompson campaign, which ended March 2024. We did not win the election, but the message that it sent to the community, about a student running and being endorsed by major organizations proved to show that students do not settle for the status quo. Our organizing power showed only a fraction of its might, and as we have seen with solidarity with local unions and national issues, we do not take the world lightly.

On the SUA I will represent each and every student in regard to their campus safety, academic queries, and advocate free-speech - even the speech I do not agree with. I will bring housing to the forefront, and advocate for the expansion of housing within my powers of this office. My work as a Political Organizer both locally and nationally, is one that has well prepared me for such a role, especially one that fits the theme of John R. Lewis College. I hope to work with you all very soon. Excelsior!

Student Organization: Student Parent Organization

Student Organization Statement:

The Student Parent Organization (SPO) is dedicated to advocating for the unique needs and challenges of student parents within our university community. As an organization, we recognize the significant barriers faced by student parents in pursuing higher education while simultaneously balancing parental responsibilities.

Our mission is to provide support, resources, and advocacy for student parents to thrive academically, personally, and professionally. We believe that every student parent deserves equitable access to educational opportunities and support services to succeed in their academic endeavors.

Through our initiatives, events, and partnerships, we aim to:
1. Raise Awareness: We strive to raise awareness of the challenges faced by student parents and advocate for policy changes and institutional support mechanisms that address their needs. By highlighting the experiences of student parents, we aim to foster a greater understanding and empathy within our university community.

2. Provide Support: We offer a supportive and inclusive space for student parents to connect, share experiences, and access resources. From peer mentoring programs to childcare assistance, we aim to alleviate the unique stressors faced by student parents and create a sense of belonging within our organization.

3. Advocate for Change: We advocate for systemic changes within our university and beyond to better support student parents. This includes advocating for affordable and flexible childcare options, financial aid reforms, and academic accommodations that recognize the needs of student parents.

4. Foster Community: We believe in the power of community and strive to foster a supportive network of student parents, allies, and advocates. Through networking events, workshops, and social gatherings, we aim to build connections and solidarity among student parents.

As an organization, we are committed to promoting equity, inclusivity, and empowerment for all student parents. We believe that by working together, we can create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment where student parents can thrive and succeed.