SGA President

Summer White ‘18

I am a DC Posse Scholar, political science major, policy studies concentrator, persistent first
generation college student, dedicated diver, and activist motivated to improve public health
and social justice in this country and empower others to do the same around the world. I strive
to be dependable and approachable while maintaining a laid back, optimistic outlook. On
campus, I was an SGA Senator in the Spring of 2015 and the SGA Assistant Treasurer from 2015-
2016. I am currently the SGA Treasurer and would love to serve as our next SGA President.
I am confident that my passion for progress and institutional knowledge would allow me to
effectively appoint, train, and empower the next SGA Cabinet to productively achieve their
aspirations. My involvement with three SGA Cabinets has formed my strong understanding of
each role within SGA. Therefore, I have no doubt that my experiences and existing relationships
with administrators make me well prepared to facilitate conversations that can successfully
articulate students’ ideas in an impactful way. I would bridge the gap between protest and
actual change- between ideas and action.

If elected, I will remain committed to representing the student body by advocating for our
interests, maintaining open channels of communication, and addressing existing and new
concerns as they arise. Some of my priorities include promoting comprehensive health,
ensuring sincere safety, urging inclusive accessibility, catering to diversity, clarifying self
governance, and encouraging meaningful academics. I also believe it would be helpful for us to
thoughtfully reexamine Grinnell College’s values, how we are embodying them currently, and
collaboratively plan and implement ways to further integrate them into the fabric of what it
means to be a part of Grinnell. This may occur through town hall meetings, small group
conversations, or forming a committee of students, staff, and faculty to tackle this topic. However, most importantly, if elected, I would want to know what you want SGA to
accomplish, and then, do everything in my power to make that happen.

I am running for SGA President to continue to voice our needs, hopes, questions, and concerns
to the administration, to connect students with resources in order to help them make the most
of their time at Grinnell, and to do all I can to improve the quality of our lives as Grinnell College
students. Please feel free to reach out [whitesum] if you would like to learn more about me, my
experiences, and my ambitions. I’d love to hear from you and eventually, have the honor of
serving as our next SGA President.
Graham Dodd ‘18

I am running for SGA President for my fellow students. I believe that, as an elected official, the President has a responsibility first and foremost to represent the student body and its wishes. Grinnellians deserve a student president they can trust to put pressure on the administration, the President, and the Trustees on why their needs are not met and their concerns disregarded. In my years here, the issues that most concern Grinnellians have remained the same despite our constant requests that they be addressed. We have all had friends drop out from treatable mental health issues or experience sexual harassment or assault. As SGA President and chief representative of the student body to the administration, faculty, and Board of Trustees, I vow that I will doggedly advocate for the divestment of Grinnell College funds from the fossil fuel industry, hiring a permanent on-campus psychiatrist, and empowering the student body with the ability to create an active, healthy, and responsible social scene in which we feel still feel free to make decisions as adults without being punished or arrested.

I love Grinnell because my inclusive, empathetic, and politically aware peers have made me feel for the first time as if I belonged. You have given me so much that I want and am prepared to spend my next year giving back. I am a third-year Political Science major from Alabama and a Senator for Clangrala. As Senator, I serve on the Reform and All-Campus Events committees. I also have extensive experience working with Grinnell College Student Action on their campaigns for a higher minimum wage in Iowa and divestment of the college’s fossil fuel investments. Finally, reporting for the Scarlet and Black keeps me extensively aware of happenings both on-campus and in town. These experiences have completely prepared me to push for the changes we have needed for years.

We should not accept as a necessity that our college will be unresponsive to many of our needs and demands. As a student who arrived on this campus when self-governance was invoked as a principle we strove to live by, I have actually seen Grinnellians as a united body do more to achieve their ideals in practice these last few months than ever before. It is therefore of paramount importance that the SGA President, as the most direct link between the student body and the administration, is willing to advocate and if necessary create tension on behalf of the students in order to achieve their goals. As your President, I promise to be that leader, and furthermore to fulfill every duty entrusted to me with the needs and will of the student body as my guiding principle.
My name is Austin Wadle and I am third year Political Science and Chemistry double major from Miami, Florida. I have spent my time at Grinnell navigating and improving institutions that have made the difference for me. I have spent the past two years serving in the Poweshiek County Party, Iowa Democratic Party and the national party through the College Democrats of America. I have spent this time reforming these institutions to be more inclusive. I have worked to make the governing documents of these institutions gender inclusive. I have fought as a trans person to make these institutions open to people like me. There are things that demand changing. I want to make sure that Grinnell stays inclusive and to make practical changes to better the lives of trans students. This includes the ability to add preferred pronouns to DB so that students do not need to publicly out themselves in every class so that they aren’t misgendered. As the son of two union teachers, I am proud of the union that has been formed but I know that the wages for all student workers should be raised and tied to inflation.

I am proud to be a Grinnellian, but know there is significant work to do so that everyone feels this way. As a political operative living and working in Grinnell, I have seen personally what happens when people aren’t listened to. A divide exists on campus and between the community and Grinnell. I have spent all of my time here at Grinnell bridging this gap. In 2014 and 2016, I led the effort to register students and connect them with the campaign to elect Democrats here in Iowa. In 2015 and 2016 I connected students to the primary campaigns and made sure students could and would participate in the 2016 caucuses where we saw the most students turn out in the history of the process. I was only able to accomplish this because of my relationships in the community and county. Students are able to vote easily because of the close relationship I have with our County Auditor. This comes from a commitment to the diversity and well-being of the students here on campus. I have seen where these connections can benefit students and I want to expand them.

Through my work as a Grinnell College Democrat, a Phonathon caller and manager, a Chemistry Lab TA, Grinnell Singer, Political Science SEPC member and a student I know what it takes to work hard and change institutions and political realities and I believe I’ll be able to do that as President of our Student Government.
My name is Kahlil Epps, I am a 3rd year, English major, and DC Posse Scholar. I have a vested interest in this institution. I personally plan to focus on student Wellness along with continuing the work already done with Title IV, SAGE Dining, and student safety. As VPSA, I would not only want to continue the work of previous VPSAs but also add some of my own initiatives. First, I want to reshape the way the college deals with mental health for example finding adequate therapists for minority students. Second, work to make both Harris and Gardner parties more inclusive and last longer. With the idea that having parties that last longer will not only add to the enjoyment of party goers but also allow intoxicated student to stay in one place for a longer period of time which would reduce unfortunate incidents from happening. Third, work to get SAGE DINNING to include the campus in creating their menus. Fourth, provide more knowledge on the decisions being made without student’s complete knowledge of or acceptance. Hopefully to give student more of a voice when it come to decision being made on their behalf. These are the things that I believe are at the utmost importance of the student body that I have seen and been around for three years. If elected I plan to see all of these through.
SGA Vice President of Academic Affairs

Zala Tomašič ‘18

My name is Zala Tomašič and I am a third year Political Science and Economics double major from Slovenia. For the past two years, I have been a senator and actively involved member of the SGA, where I sit on most of the committees. Additionally, I act as a student representative on the Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) and I am the SPARC Media Coordinator as well as a member of the Swim and Dive Team.

I am running for VPAA to maintain Grinnell’s academic rigor, introduce post course follow ups, and standardize syllabi for introductory classes. I am interested in academic policies and I am already involved in shaping them as one of the two student representatives on the CAS. I have specific goals I want to accomplish in addition to the numerous duties expected of me as the VPAA. First, I want to ensure that professors return final papers and exams to us. We labour on them for many hours, and receiving their feedback is important. It is not fair or helpful only to see our final grades on p-web. Next, I want to make sure that all introductory classes have a similar structure, are equally demanding, and bring students to the same academic level regardless of the professor who teaches the class.

If elected, I will strive to secure the implementation of these newer, beneficial policies as well as safeguard the high academic standard that is unique to Grinnell. If you have any questions feel free to email [tomasicz] me or stop me if you see me around campus.

Misha Gelnarova ‘18

Hello Grinnellians, my name is Misha and I am a third year international student from the Czech Republic. As an independent major, I work closely with four Grinnell’s departments (Spanish, Political Science, Art, and Economics) and I would like to become the student voice in the academic matters.

I am currently on my second study abroad since I get to take classes that Grinnell unfortunately does not offer. To me, the complete lack of photography and audiovisual classes at Grinnell is dire. Throughout the year I will work with the administration and students to demonstrate the demand for these classes and advocate for bringing them to campus. I know that this is a process that will take a long time, thus, I want to focus on coming up with a shorter-term options as well, such as creating workshops with the help from the professionals at the Grinnell’s Communications Office. As VPAA I will advocate for all other students and groups that are in a similar position.

Further, I will make classes with travel components more visible so that everyone knows about them and has a chance to apply.
I will continue with Aaronson’s effort to foster the student-professor relationship and focus especially on first- and second years, so that their search for advisors would be as easy as possible.

I will encourage more interaction of the student body with our alumni, helping to make both professional and informal connections.

I will work with Writing Lab, tutors and other academic support services to create events that will encourage students to get some of their work done well ahead of finals in order to avoid stressful end of the semester.

Finally, I am dedicated to ensuring that all Grinnellians have the support they need to succeed during their studies both on and off campus.