

Executive Council Candidate Statement for Steven Ortega

I am running for Vice-President of Student Concerns for the same reasons I ran for Freshman Representative; namely, I identify strongly with CC's student community and want to see the views and concerns of students taken seriously on our campus. Having now served the better part of a year as a representative on full council, I can say that this desire has only intensified. I believe more strongly than ever that CC student's are in need of dedicated representatives to constructively advance the interests of students in a manner that produces tangible, lasting change when needed, and defends those aspects of CC that are not in need of change. Moreover, CC's students are also in need of representatives who understand the complex rules and administrative system that governs most of what happens on this campus, and can advocate for their interests even on issues unknown to most students. It is my desire to fulfill all of these needs as the chair of the Student Concerns committee, which I believe is the optimal place to advocate on behalf of student interests and to identify issues that may impact students.

However, accompanying my interest in representing the collective concerns of our student body is my view that CCSGA as it currently stands is neither sufficiently connected to the true interests of students, nor structured in such a way as to allow change to be enacted on our collective behalf. This inaction has been reflected in issues ranging from the closing of the CC Soup Kitchen to the failure of CCSGA to pass a single resolution until the 6th block of this year, and demands correction. However, it is difficult to expect any other result given the very structure of our student government, which provides few avenues for and many impediments to change. Currently there exists no direct forum where student grievances or concerns can be addressed to CCSGA, no system by which students can easily hold us accountable in addressing their concerns, and no swift means to enact change given the infrequency of full council

meetings and the complexity of the amending process. These structural factors combined with the difficulty of planning ahead on the block plan and the high turnover rate of experienced CCSGA members contribute to a government often paralyzed in all but its most basic functions, which therefore fails to effectively identify and address student concerns.

My vision for the future of CCSGA is thus one that addresses these problems and allows our government to work more efficiently and transparently in service of the students we represent. For instance, when elected, I will immediately and permanently schedule blockly Student Concerns hearings, at which time all students will be welcome to bring any and all concerns directly to the committee that is meant to represent them. These or any other concerns brought to us will then be recorded and displayed on either CCSGA's website or Facebook page. My committee will then document our progress on each of the concerns raised, and finally post how each concern was solved, or otherwise explain the outcome of our investigation, thereby allowing students to hold us more accountable. Beyond that, I will also push for structural change in CCSGA's constitution by authoring an amendment that will enable future amendments to be made more swiftly than the 2 weeks it currently takes, and encourage more resolutions on issues that concerns students.

In order to enact these changes, I will draw on my time on the Student Concerns Committee and in full council so far and the skills I have learned to do so effectively while also managing the business of my committee and serving on full council. In particular, my experience has repeatedly taught me that the skill of time management is absolutely vital for any endeavor of student government, as we only currently meet 3 times per block and our initiatives are always in competition with academic commitments. The most effective way to manage a committee is to then create a committee schedule during the summer, and to develop all major projects far ahead

of time in order to avoid running out the clock. Additionally, perhaps the most vital and difficult skill to master is that of understanding how CCSGA and our college's administration actually function, as most often these are the factors that make or break a project. Having successfully completed initiatives that relied on cooperation from both CCSGA and the administration, I possess a familiarity with these topics that would enable me to easily transition to the Student Concerns chair, and thus better serve the interests of our campus.